

# HEARTBREAK HOTEL

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**RHYTHM SISTERS**  
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TRINA ROBBINS • RICKY SLAUGHTER  
DAVE GIBBONS' MUSICAL MADNESS  
JESSAMY: PIN-UP SPECIAL

GRAPHIC SOUND BY  
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# HEART BREAK HOTEL

THE LIFESTYLE COMIC MAGAZINE

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To advertise in HEARTBREAK HOTEL, ring (04) 435 2637 and speak to Lionel or Don.



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THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF DIVINE AND DORI

HEARTBREAK HOTEL: The Lifestyle Comic Magazine! Volume 1, Number 3, April/May 1986. Published bi-monthly by Willyprods/Small Time 29 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4DX. HEARTBREAK HOTEL, 'The Lifestyle Comic Magazine', copyright © Willyprods/Small Time Ink Ltd. Don't reproduce anything that appears in HEARTBREAK HOTEL (unless you're reviewing the magazine) without getting permission from the pub.

# RECEPTION

**T**URN ON, TUNE IN. But whatever you do, don't drop out. Not now. The time has come to get involved again. Take a tip from what's going on in the world of comics...

In the US, top comic artists have contributed to *STRIP AIDS USA*, a fund-raising comic book for people with AIDS. And "book" is indeed the operative word, as *STRIP AIDS USA* contains some 200 pages of original work by the finest artists spanning all of modern comics history — from the godfather of graphic innovation, Will Eisner, to new-wavers Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez.

Congratulations to Bill Sienkiewicz, Robert Triptow, Ron Turner and, especially, Trina Robbins for having put together something that everyone (ourselves included) said was impossible to put together!

On the home front, this summer sees the publication of *AARGH!* — Artists Against Rampant Government Homophobia. The first release from Alan Moore's newly-formed publishing company, Mad Love Publishing, *AARGH!* is a reaction to Clause 28 of the Local Government Finance Bill, which makes illegal the "promotion of homosexuality".

The ramifications of such an imprecisely-worded piece of legislation are terrifying, and a stellar array of graphic artists from the UK and the US are raising their pens in protest against the introduction of what amounts to government-approved discrimination against 10 per cent (at least) of British society.

For those of you who would like to add your voice to those of the artists, why not join us on Saturday, April 30 for what promises to be the biggest protest rally London has ever seen. Assemble from 12.00 noon at Embankment tube, and look out for the *AARGH!* banner. And be sure to bring along your own placard — a speech balloon with the word *AARGH!* on it.

Moving headlong from social activism to milder forms of entertainment, the past month has seen the release of a number of exciting new graphic albums. From DC, there is *The Killing Joke*. Alan Moore and Brian Bolland's long-awaited Batman/Joker confrontation from Valkyrie Press, there is the second volume of Bryan Talbot's *Luther*.



Arkwright trilogy. And from *Heartbreak Hotel*, there is the opportunity to get absolutely free a Joker or Luther Arkwright T-shirt.

That's right! Titan Books has generously donated five Joker T-shirts, while Bryan Talbot has supplied us with five *Luther Arkwright* T-shirts. All you have to do is send us a postcard with your name, address, and choice of T-shirt clearly marked. The first ten cards received (five for each shirt) will get the T-shirt of their choice (all are fashionably extra-large).

Finally, from Steven Appleby we have *Rockets — A Way Of Life*. These are the memoirs of Captain Jim Star, once proud captain of the interstellar cruiser the Boiling Hell, now stranded on a world with no name, waiting for a message from Mission Control which never comes.

Steven has generously donated a Captain Star Survival Kit, which includes a signed copy of *Rockets — A Way Of Life*, a signed wall poster in fashionable black and silver, a T-shirt, a T-towel, a set of postcards, a Mission Control badge, and a delightful mobile (as displayed in the Captain's own lounge).

Because this is such a gala prize, you're going to have to work a little harder to win it. Send us the correct answer to the following question: How many heads does atomic engine stoker Limbs Jones have? Answers on a postcard or the back of an envelope please, with your address clearly marked. Competition deadline is April 30; the winner will be announced in our next issue.

Looks like we'd best get on with our psychedelic revival now. But don't forget we'll be back in two months with *Anarchy* in the 80s, a celebration of the glory that was punk. And before we go, we'd like to draw your attention to a very kind letter we received from a very young fan. Thank you Leah. Peace and love.

Dear Don and long  
I found this in my "garbage mail  
stickers" collection I thought you  
might like it

From  
Leah Moore  
(14 years old)





EIGHT  
miles

WIGHT











let's go... He's got to  
come out one day...

Who is he  
anyway...?

...my Father....



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# NO STRINGS

N O, I'D NEVER sing that song again. I didn't want to sing it then." The song, of course, is *Puppet on a String*. And the irony is that it went a long way to making Sandie Shaw a household name all over Europe.

"I think that was in '67. If feminism had started then, I wasn't aware of it. But when I heard that song, I understood instinctively what feminism was. I had to sing it though. I was under contract to sing the number the people chose.

"The song was selected by a panel of men. There wasn't one woman on it. And they were all old. Well, to me they were old 'coz I was only about 19. I presume they were about 40, which in those days was pretty old. In those days, you went to school, you did a bit of playing about and then you got old."

Sandie Shaw is older herself these days — though you wouldn't know it to look at her. "It's my face. My thingies here," she says, pointing to the strong lines of her jaw and cheekbones. "I should have been a male actor with this big square jaw. My son's got it. He's going to be so handsome when he grows up," she says, laughing.

Of course, it wasn't just her voice and her face that got attention. As the cab driver remarked when I told him I was on the way to meet her, "She's the one with no shoes and socks." Her barefoot presence caused quite a ruckus at times. And I have to know: was it fashion or was it bunions?

"Oh, there wasn't any particular reason," she says, amazed that I should recall it. "I mean, you only do something because you do something. I just don't like wearing shoes. And also, I'm short-sighted, and when I have my feet on the ground... especially when you're on stage — you know where you're going and what you're doing."

"When I was younger, I used to fancy myself to be a bit of a Beatnik. I think that was part of it, because I'd think, 'Beatniks are doing this sort of thing'. So I just got into it when I was quite young and it never stopped."

As we sit drinking tea out of Beatles mugs, Sandie talks about her recent work and her plans for the future.

"I haven't really done anything last year except for a couple of AIDS benefits. But the year before that I did a university tour, which was great. I could never have done it when I was a girl because it was just not the done thing to do. It was just not seemly. One had to do very glamorous sort of things that I *hated*. So it was really good to be able to go on stage in cut-off jeans and just do what I fancied."

"I used to lead like this double life. I used to be this person when I was off which was me, and when I went on I had to pretend I was this other person. But now I'm the same person on and off. Mostly. You still have to be bigger than you really are when you are on stage, but mostly it's just me."

"I enjoy doing everything more now. I'm in the process of doing my own album. I started thinking about it when I did *Sheila Take a Bow*. Morrissey wrote me a little note after that which inspired me to write a song called *Hello Angel* (he writes notes like that)."

"I wrote it with a guy called Chris Andrews, who used to write all my songs for me then. I find that now I just want to say what I need to say, but he's always let me interfere, which is brilliant."

"I wrote that song and then I thought, 'Shall I record it or not, 'coz I've only got the one song,' and I left it for a while. And then I went into the studio when Morrissey did his solo effort last year and it just seemed to me so easy to do that sort of thing. I don't mean easy, it's just so natural to me. And I thought, 'Well why aren't I doing it?'"

"So far I've written about nine songs that I'm happy with, some of them with Chris. And Richard Coles is working with me. He's brilliant, and a real help with things like orchestration."

"I want to sing the way I always wanted to and was never able to. I want to take charge of all the things I used to do in an unofficial capacity, but do it properly now. And have the confidence to do it instead of hiding behind people."

The bell rings and it's time for Sandie to collect her children from school. "Sainsbury's one day, *Top of the Pops* the next," she says. "It's just normal." But as she goes out the door, I can just see her stepping into the spotlight.





# ATTACHED



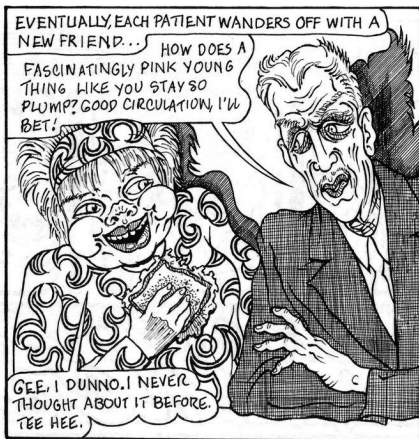


PEOPLE, YOU KNOW.  
THEY HAVEN'T SEEN A  
BIG CITY IN QUITE A  
WHILE NOW.

AN HOUR LATER....

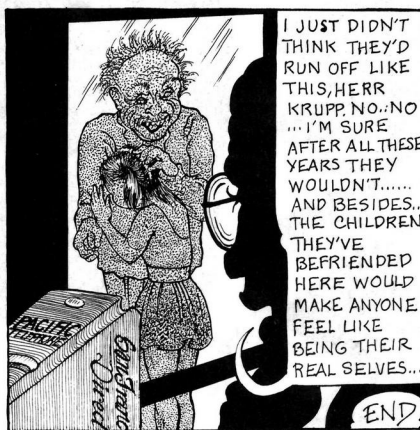
BOPPIN' OUT ON BROWNIES TO THE GROTEFUL DEAD







MY GOODNESS, BERNICE! I'VE DONE IT AGAIN! YOU PROMISED YOU'D HELP ME... BUT POOR DARLING... I COULDN'T LET HER GO WITHOUT PUNISHING HER FOR TOUCHING US. WHAT WE REALLY NEED ARE NICE BLACK PLASTIC BAGS.





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*California*  
**GIRLS**"

from



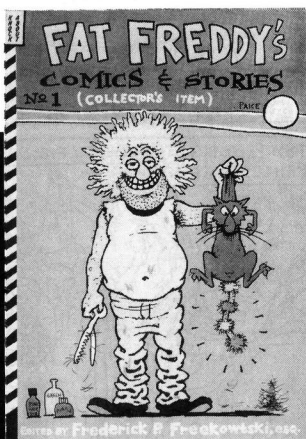
-Don Thompson  
Comics Buyers Guide

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# RHYTHM IN BLUE JEANS

CONTRARY TO POPULAR belief, Mandi and Debi Laek are no longer schoolgirls. The fallacy probably springs from a well-worn anecdote about their being suspended for writing songs during lessons.

While they no longer have to worry about lessons, writing songs has become something of a (pre-) occupation for them. Because Mandi and Debi Laek are now better known as the Rhythm Sisters.

Over numerous cans of Fosters at Birmingham's Hummingbird, the two sisters divulge their impressive musical CV. Now 19 and 20, they cite an idyllic Leeds childhood spent listening to their parents' record collection — Connie Francis, Dusty Springfield, Gene Pitney — as a big influence. At the ages of 13 and 14, when most of us were playing Space Invaders, they played their first live gig in a local pub. Not eager to repeat the experience, they retreated to their bedroom for three years and "practised in front of the curtains pretending they were a massive crowd". Finally, they unleashed their unique brand of folk-pop in the folk clubs of Yorkshire with step-brother Billy on guitar. "The songs were going down really well," recalls Debi. "They were booking us for folk festivals and we thought, 'We're on to a winning formula here'."

Audience reaction to their unique musical style — so original that it defies adequate description, although 'Blondie meets C&W' should give a good idea — was hot when they toured with Scotland's favourite sons The Proclaimers last autumn. Since then, their debut album of well-crafted acoustic melodies and earthy vocals, *Road to Roundhay Pier*, has risen to number four in the independent charts.

Peroxide blondes, they are witty and approachable with a tendency to talk at the same time, as Mandi testifies: "On stage I'll start talking, then Debi will start and I'll go, 'Do you mind... just shut up a minute!'"

"We're not in the music business to be sex symbols but

for the love of it," explains Debi. "We're feminists and do things we feel fit in, like Red Wedge and miners' benefits. We come from a mining background and that to me means everything."

This sort of down-to-earth view is evident in the way they present themselves. Their determination to be seen for what they really are, instead of a contrived record company image, was behind their decision to sign with an independent label after a deal with Chrysalis failed.

"The men at the top wanted us to wear frilly knickers and turn people on. They tried to publicise us as schoolgirls — the male fantasy sort of thing — just because we have a song called *Homework*. But you have to present yourself on stage as you are off-stage; it's when you confuse the two that the complexes start."

With Red Rhino Records they have autonomy. They dress in their own style, with a philosophy of "anything goes" — so long as it complements red lipstick and Doc Marten boots.

Writing songs seems to come to Mandi and Debi as easily as talking. *Roundhay Pier* is a trip down memory lane, chronicling teenage joys and angst — first kisses, unfinished schoolwork and lazy afternoons with friends. It also includes the anti-Tory sentiment of *Everything is turning blue* and a sardonic look at teenage dreams in the USA, *American boys*.

As they grow older, their songs are naturally maturing. "A new song, *Sister Veronica*, is about women who are stuck in tower blocks, on drugs and tired of life. We don't mean to preach, but we can put messages across in a subtle way."

The most important question for those who have already succumbed to the charms of *Roundhay Pier*, is will the Rhythm Sisters still be around in five or ten years? "We're going to be there for thirty! We're all so close that even if we said, 'We've come to the end here', next day it'd be, 'Do you fancy doing another gig!'" Something to look forward to.



**Interview by Kate Rock  
Photo by Paul Bryans**

# Emily

STORY/ART: FLOYD H. & SARITA HUGHES  
SCRIPT: PAT SULLIVAN

IMAGINE BEING FIVE YEARS OLD.  
IMAGINE HAVING THE POWER OF THE SUN.

IMAGINE BEING SCARED AND CONFUSED  
IMAGINE YOU ARE LONELY (NO FRIENDS NO TOYS).

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

EMILY KNOWS.

ONLY NO-ONE HAS BOTHERED TO ASK EMILY!

THEY'VE PUT HER IN A REINFORCED OBSERVATION CELL,  
AND THEY ARE WATCHING HER.

WATCHING AND WAITING.

AND EMILY KNOWS THEY ARE THERE

AND SHE KNOWS WHAT THEY WANT

THEY WANT IT AS BAD AS MUMMY AND DADDY  
WANTED HER TO GO TO BED, (SO THEY COULD  
WATCH T.V. AND IGNORE HER)

THEY WANT IT AS BAD AS MRS COSTA WANTED  
HER TO SHUT UP IN CLASS (SO THAT SHE COULD  
TEACH THE OTHER CHILDREN AND IGNORE HER)

EMILY LISTENS TO THEIR SILENCE, AND EMILY  
BEGINS TO GET ANGRY

AND EMILY BEGINS TO HATE:

FIRST THERE WERE THE QUESTIONS:

"WHERE ARE YOUR PARENTS?"

"MRS COSTA?"

"WHERE IS PAMMY?"

"BILLY?"

"STEVE?"

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, BUT  
NEVER A "HOW ARE  
YOU FEELING, EMILY?"

THE SILLY MEN WITH CAMERAS

THE FUNNY MEN IN WHITE

THEN THEY TOOK AWAY  
HER TOYS, LOCKED HER IN  
THIS ROOM, AND WATCH  
AND WAIT.

EMILY KNOWS WHAT THEY WANT  
THEY DON'T WANT HER, JUST IT.  
AND WHEN THEY GET IT, THEY'LL  
IGNORE HER JUST LIKE THE REST  
OF THEM.

AND THE NASTY MEN IN BLACK



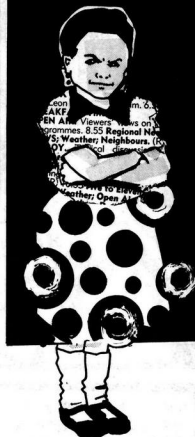
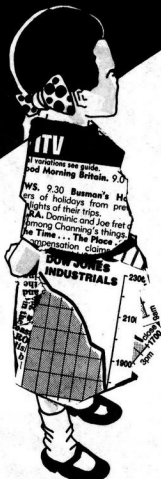
"WHERE ARE THEY?" EMILY DOESN'T KNOW, AND DOESN'T CARE. NO-ONE PLAYED WITH EMILY. IT MADE HER SAD.

SHE ASKED DADDY TO PLAY: "NO. GO AWAY. I'M BUSY." MUMMY COULDN'T PLAY BECAUSE SHE HAD TO COOK, AND EMILY WAS "GETTING IN THE WAY..."

HER SCHOOLMATES DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY HER GAMES: "THEY'RE TOO SILLY... YOU'RE TOO YOUNG: YOU'RE A GIRL."

ANY EXCUSE TO MAKE HER GO AWAY.

ALWAYS LEAVING HER ALONE.  
LEAVING HER SAD  
MAKING HER MAD.



IT WASN'T HER FAULT. THEY SHOULD HAVE PLAYED WITH HER, NOT JUST TELL HER TO GO AWAY. IN THE END, SHE GOT REALLY MAD, AND WISHED THEY WOULD GO AWAY.

EMILY LISTENS TO THE SILENCE AND SHE KNOWS THEY ARE WATCHING.

WHEN THE LIGHTS AND PRETTY NOISES LEFT, THEY HAD ALL GONE AND EMILY PLAYED HAPPILY, ALONE WITH HER TOYS.

EMILY KNOWS WHAT THEY WANT AND SHE IS MAD ENOUGH TO SHOW THEM.



SHOW.

SHOW THEM.

SHOW AND TELL.

SHOW THEM AND MAKE THEIR DAY.

Show.



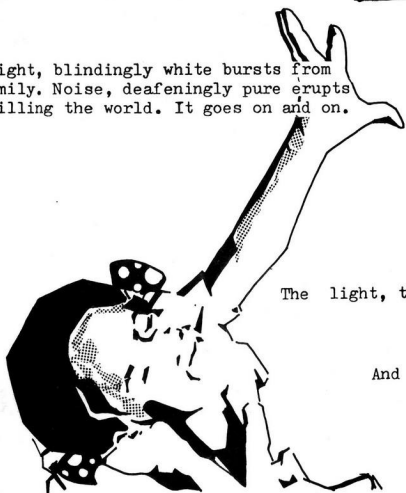
Show them the little lights,  
let them hear the soft noises,  
let them see what you can do.



Emily has shown them what she can do....

....she hopes they like it.

Light, blindingly white bursts from  
Emily. Noise, deafeningly pure erupts  
filling the world. It goes on and on.

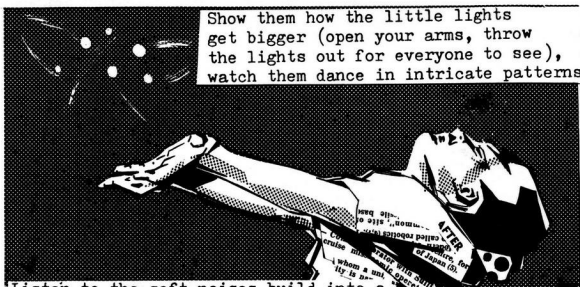


The light, the noise, they go on.

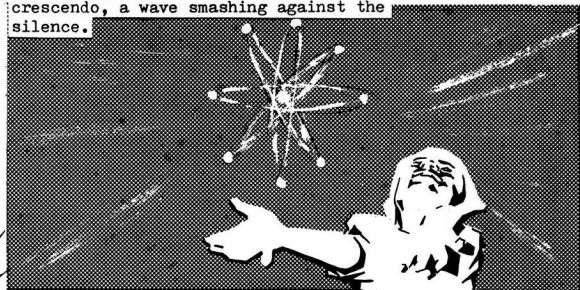
And there is silence.

And nothing.

Show them how the little lights  
get bigger (open your arms, throw  
the lights out for everyone to see),  
watch them dance in intricate patterns.



Listen to the soft noises build into a  
crescendo, a wave smashing against the  
silence.



Show them how the lights and noises  
grew together, getting bigger, stronger.  
Shifting their shapes, altering their  
patterns....



....flowing, glowing, searching,  
finding, joining into a symphony  
of destruction and creation.

Emily has shown them  
what she can do.



**Magic  
bunnies  
hop it**

Emily knows they  
have gone....



....she doesn't know where  
and she doesn't care.



In the silence she plays.

Alone.



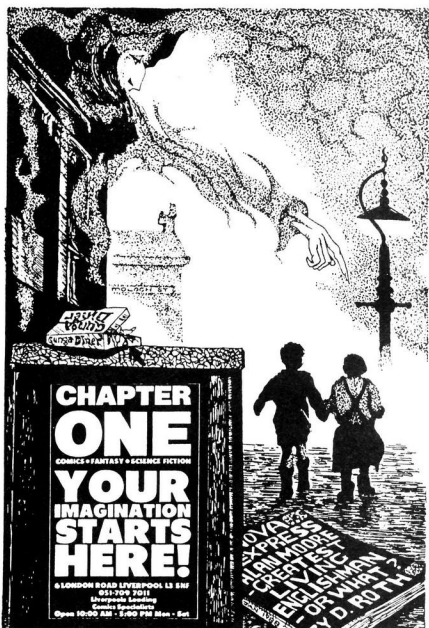
With her toys.



Emily tries, but misunderstands....

....why nobody wants to play with her....





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**gilbert SHELTON david LLOYD kev O'NEILL**  
**brian BOLLAND & phil ELLIOT**

# JOHN PEEL



# ROCK OF AGES

**A**BOUT SIX OR seven years ago, when I was in one of my first bands, I commenced a largely one-sided correspondence with John Peel. It was not totally one-sided though: whenever I would stop writing to him, a short anxious note would appear, maybe a month later, wondering if there was any reason for my reticence.

When Don and Lionel decided to include interviews with various celebs in this new comic, I volunteered my services as Peel-interviewer. The only trouble is, if you are in any way acquainted with someone it is almost impossible to conduct an interview; what results is more of a conversation.

So here is our conversation. And although we didn't stick to our subject of comics and psychedelic music, I'm sure you will agree that he is still a very interesting chap.

AS AN OVERPRIVILEGED, middle class youth, we had the *Beano* and the *Dandy*, and one or two other things as well. I had *Radio Fun* and *Hotspur*, but there was too much reading in *Hotspur*. *Beano* and *Dandy* were still the mainstays of our life.

**Do you like *Viz* Comic?**

I do, yes. I thought I had a complete set of them, but things have deteriorated at home so much that I've had to employ someone to sort out my records and magazines. During the course of this I was expecting to come up with a complete set of *Viz* Comics, and also a complete set of *Sniffin' Glue*, but unfortunately they all seem to have disappeared. I don't know if somebody's half-inched them at some stage or if I've filed them away somewhere.

I particularly liked the rude kid. I would like to have been like him as a child but I was far too polite and

timid. And Johnny Farpants I liked too. The only one I don't like is the fish that plays football. I can never remember his name ...

**Wisp:** Billy.

Billy the ...

**Wisp:** Fish.

Oh yes. But perhaps I'm missing the point. The letters page I think is quite wonderful as well. Two of the writers' names in one of the annuals were names of people who were in Medicine Head, who recorded for Dandelion Records.

**(Phone rings. A young man wants to sing his songs over the phone. John suggests it will be difficult to judge the quality of them over the phone; could he send him a tape? The young man has no money to buy tapes. John takes down his name and address so he can send him a tape or two.) Can I ask you about The Misunderstood?**

Well, I first heard them when I went to the opening of a new shopping precinct in Riverside, California, where I'd gone to see a band called Northside Moss. I was just about to go home when I saw this band setting up. There was this bloke who had long hair even by Californian standards, so I decided to stick around, and I thought they were wonderful.

I started to go round with them and get them a few gigs, including one in a topless club in Watts. This was about two years after the riots and it was still a bit of dodgy area of LA. Eventually it became clear they weren't going to get very far in America, so I suggested they tried England as they had a sort of post-Yardbirds sound.

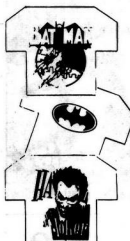
They went to live with my mother in Notting Hill and stayed for about six months, for which she's never fully forgiven me. They sent me a copy of *I Can Take You To The Sun* and I decided that I hadn't been wrong. If they'd have been a bit luckier I think they would have

● Continued on page 25

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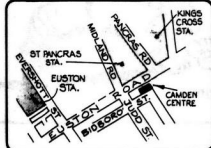


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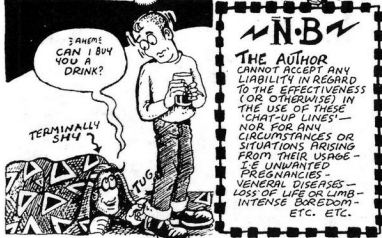
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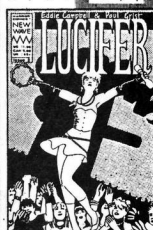


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been really successful. I still think they were one of the best bands I've ever seen.

I don't really know what they're all doing now... the band split up when the singer Bob got drafted. Now, apparently, he's a ruby dealer who travels round the world.

And I met Jefferson Airplane. I went to their recording sessions when they were recording *Surrealistic Pillow*. They were thoroughly unfriendly. But, as you know, bands are like little gangs, and when you're in the studio the last thing you want is some dickhead going round trying to shake your hand and saying how much you liked their last LP.

**Did you like their last LP?**

Their last LP was their first LP. I'd liked it well enough to want to go and meet them. I suppose I must have been taken there by the representative of their record company.

I used to go and see other bands. I liked The Seeds a lot, I remember. In those days... I was 25 or 26, but not like a 25 or 26-year-old would be today. I was stunningly naive. And that's why when people sit and make superior remarks about people who sit around outside the BBC, and go "Ugh — anoraks!", I think... well, I wore an anorak and I probably still would be wearing one if I hadn't got a job like this. So I don't like to hear people talking like that.

The Seeds probably just thought, "Jesus, here comes that pillock from England again." And I used to think I was their mate! I've got photographs of myself in their dressing room and stuff like that.

I also saw the West-Coast Pop-Art Experimental Band playing a high-school gig, which was quite good and I once saw a band called the W. C. Fields Memorial Electric String Band, who recorded for Hanna Barbera Records!

I used to see The Doors quite a lot. Can't remember if I saw Love or not. The trouble is, people expect something like that to be one of the things you'll never forget, but when you're doing something that's subsequently going to turn out to have been of historical interest (unless it's something quite horrendous like the Heysel Stadium thing that the Pig and I were in — you *know* that's historic and wish it wasn't)... But with gigs and so on, you don't realise they were crucial until ten years later — by which time your memory's erased them and been wiped clean.

I saw Beefheart. A bit like now, I was the only person playing their stuff in England, and probably the world, so consequently they were more popular in Europe than they were in the States. I've got a photo of me sitting next to Beefheart in his hotel room, on his bed.

I hung around with them on their first tour and introduced them when they played their first gig in England at Middle Earth in Covent Garden. I actually burst into floods of tears in the middle of my introduction, I was so moved by it... It was something I'd wanted to do for a really long time.

I hired a Mini and drove him and the drummer around to various gigs. One of the best was at Frank Freeman's Dancing School in Kidderminster. They thought it was a really good name — a bit like Quicksilver Messenger Service or something — until I explained that it was, actually, a dancing school run by a Mr Frank Freeman.

Mr and Mrs Frank Freeman used to run this just because they wanted people in Kidderminster to have somewhere to go. They were quite wonderful. They used to turn up with pots of tea and sandwiches with the crusts cut off and sit and talk to you... just about my favourite venue on earth at the time.

**It sounds a bit like the Bay Hotel at Gourock. Bands play there for only £50 because it's such a good place — they lay on a bus for all the kids from Greenock. We stayed in the Bridal Suite, which had a video and a jacuzzi. There are old-fashioned shoe-cleaning machines and an ice-**

**maker that plops all night. And you get huge breakfasts like Edwardian people used to have. In one of the rooms they've got Winston Churchill's signature on the ceiling, that he stood on his bed to write one night when he was pissed... Do you still like Glenn Baxter?**

Not as much as I did. I think he doesn't either if you see what I mean. You feel that, as he gradually gets relegated to postage-stamp size and *The Mail on Sunday*, there's a feeling of disenchantment and they don't seem to be terribly funny any more. Walters went to see an exhibition of his recently where he'd "gone serious". I like things with heavy lines in them — like *Viz Comics*. I like them because I came from Newcastle, and that's our sixth-form humour. First time I saw one I'd been living away from the North-east and my little brother sent me one. I looked at it and thought, "I'm sure I must know the bloke who did this." The humour was just like everyone's at my school.

I really like Ray Lowry. He's almost the only contemporary cartoonist that I own a cartoon by. I did an article for *Punch* years ago and he did this cartoon on the same page of quite a big room with walls lined with records and a woman who did actually look slightly like the Pig sitting on a chair at a coffee table, and very little else, and the husband standing in the doorway, and she's just saying, "Another record dear, how nice!" It seemed to sum up our kind of domestic situation pretty accurately. It hangs in our downstairs loo. Louis XIV used to hang the Mona Lisa in his... Ours is more like a living room really, but we happen to have a toilet and bath in it.

**Do you like Hogarth or Daumier or anyone like that?**

Well Hogarth... you see sort of Hogarthian characters around or imagine yourself in a Hogarthian situation. But the other chap, I'm afraid I don't know anything about him.

**No, I don't either.**

Ha! I thought you were going to start rattling off middle-European names at me. I do actually have some H. M. Bateman cartoons. I bought them really cheaply in a little gallery in Cork Street.

*Punch* used to play a very big part in the days of my dad's generation. It defined petit-bourgeois lives, really, in the twenties and thirties. And H. M. Bateman's name used to be almost a part of the language. They'd describe a situation as a "Bateman situation" and people would instantly know what they meant.

So when I saw these Batemans for sale, I bought them as much as a homage to my dad as anything else. I thought he'd quite like the idea of his son having some of Bateman's cartoons. They've still got the printing instructions on them.

**One last question — who are you going to get to illustrate your memoirs?**

I'd quite like the Pig to do it really. The Pig's done these little books, and she always does cards for my birthday and Christmas and so on. And wedding anniversaries.

She always does a card and each year she has to redo the thing from scratch. She goes through all the years of our relationship, however many there have been, and does a little panel for each one of them. For the first few it's just us standing there with varying lengths of hair, and then children start arriving or she gets pregnant... right up to the present, with William the same size as her.

They're just stick men but they seem to me to be entirely the right sort of things to have. She does very good footballers and cars too. So I think I'd keep it in-house and get her to do it. And the children too, of course.

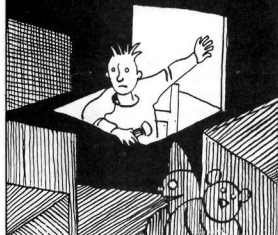
*PS: The Pig is John's wife Sheila, who doesn't look like a pig at all. Wisp is his discreet assistant, who wears his spectacles on a string.*

**Helen McCookerybook**

# THE LIVING ENDING

© TOM TIFFIN 2-1988

THAT DAY I COULDN'T WAIT FOR MA AND PA TO LEAVE THE HOUSE. I'D BEEN DYING FOR AGES TO GET UP INTO THE ATTIC TO EXPLORE.



FOR YEARS IT HAD BEEN STRICTLY OUT OF BOUNDS TO ME. THIS OPPORTUNITY WAS TOO GOOD TO MISS. I MUST SAY IT WAS PRETTY CREEPY UP THERE.



WELL... IT WASN'T AS EXCITING AS I EXPECTED. GOD KNOWS WHY THEY MADE SUCH A FUSS ABOUT NOT ALLOWING ME UP THERE.



CLAMBERING OVER A PILE OF OLD BOXES I MADE AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY.



IT WAS THEIR OLD RECORD COLLECTION. PHEW! SOME OF IT WAS REALLY WEIRDED OUT OLD HIPPLE GUNK. I CHOSE AN OLD WARPED SCRATCHED-TO-HELL DISC AN' PUT IT ON THE TURNTABLE.



TALK ABOUT UGLY! STEEZ... WHAT A RACKET I WAS ABOUT TO TAKE THE THING OFF WHEN...



THE ATTIC BURST INTO BRIGHT ACIDIC COLOURS AND MY HEAD POUNDED WITH WEIRD RHYTHMS AND NOISES.



WHAT THE HECK MY PARENTS MUST HAVE BEEN INTO! I HAD NO IDEA. WILD LIGHTS PLAYED AROUND ME. I COULDN'T MOVE AND THE ATTIC SEEMED TO EXPAND INTO INFINITY.





SUDDENLY THE MUSIC STOPPED, I WAS LEFT SUSPENDED IN MID-AIR. SILENCE, ONLY A FAINT CLICKING NOISE FROM THE RECORD PLAYER PERMEATED THE DARKNESS.



I HEARD A FAINT SHUFFLING SOUND ACCOMPANIED BY A FEW MUFFLED GROANS - IT STARTED HEADING TOWARDS ME.



THE NOISES STOPPED FOR A FEW MINUTES. THEN! IN THE DARK, SOMETHING BRUSHED AGAINST MY LEG!



I FRANTICALLY GROPPED FOR THE TORCH AND QUICKLY PLICKED IT ON.



SOMETHING LET OUT A HIDEOUS SCREAM.

IT WAS AN OLD BEARDED BLOKE HE SAID HIS NAME WAS JIM AND THAT HE HAD BEEN KEPT PRISONER IN THE ATTIC BY MY PARENTS SINCE 1971.



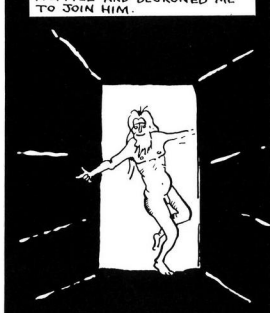
THE OLD GIT SEEMED A BIT DERANGED AND STARTED MUTTERING TO HIMSELF ABOUT WHAT A LIBERTY IT WAS BEING ABDUCTED WHILE HE WAS HAVING A BATH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.



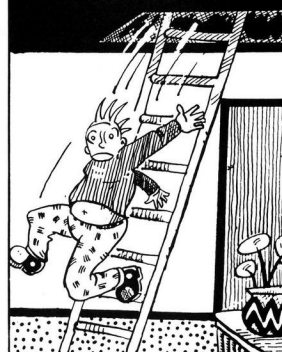
THEN A STRANGE LOOK OF JOY SPREAD ACROSS HIS FACE AND HE RAN ABOUT IN A FRENZY OF EXCITEMENT... YOU'VE DONE IT, HE SAID, THE LINBO HAS BEEN BROKEN. THEN A DEAD ODD THING HAPPENED. BEHIND HIM, OUT OF NO WHERE, A SHIMMERING TRANSPARENT DOOR APPEARED.



HE RAN TOWARDS THE OPENING AND ALMOST HYSTERICAL WITH JOY SHOUTED TO THE WORLD AT LARGE - "THERE ARE THINGS THAT ARE KNOWN AND THINGS THAT ARE UNKNOWN - IN BETWEEN ARE DOORS" HE CALMED DOWN A LITTLE AND BECKONED ME TO JOIN HIM.



HOWEVER, I WAS REAL GONE MAN.



THIS IS THE END

# TECHNO

*speaking for themselves* THE ORGANISATION WE like to call SuperCulture started off about two years ago as an idea. Since then, everything we have done has been encompassed within this idea.

When we moved to London, we started developing ourselves as Subway Steranko, famed ex-serial killer, and Spug Atomic, interplanetary trouble-shooter. It was an exercise in self-confidence and self-promotion.

Spug started a narcissist movement, promoting the idea that everyone is a star. It was basically: "You are a star, love yourself, steal an education. If you've got to go to school, learn what they have to say and then use it."

There's nothing wrong with the education they offer you at college or polytechnic, it's just that they don't offer the right fusion of elements. We're more interested in mass culture and cross-overs between everything. Taking comics out of one context and putting them into other contexts. Doing the same thing with fashion and rock and roll.

More recently, other people have become involved, other people with capabilities we haven't got. These include Anna Chronik, who specialises in body art; José Greenwood; Spug Atomic's wife, Livia Starchild; and a crazy fine artist called Sean.

The basis of all our work is the book, TechnoTribe. We started it as a cross between the 1950s trash comics and the Japanese manga, and that developed into the artwork you see now. We both share the writing and the drawing, and work on the same art simultaneously.

The story itself is all about our environment and the way we react to it. It's set in a huge city, the modern concept of a city. The TechnoTribe are a tribe of people descended from South American Indians. It's very positive in the sense that they've been brought into the urban technological environment and yet they've survived and held on to their culture. They just applied their previous culture to their new environment. In the same

# OTTRIBE

way that the South American Indians worship the forests and the things that brought them food and warmth and light, TechnoTribe worship skyscrapers, electricity and computers. It's the language of the world around them.

The philosophy behind it is one of living in harmony with your environment, whatever environment that might be. So TechnoTribe, their hearts beat with the throb of the huge city; they are spiritually connected to electricity.

The two central characters are ourselves, Spug Atomic and Subway Steranko. In order to make the characters exist, we are like method actors — we live and dress the part. We perform in our group, Zarjaz, under the same names and as the same characters. But we became the characters before the comic. Rather than trying to translate a comic into real life, we're translating real life into a comic.

Because the book is about real life, we felt that it came over into everyday life very easily. Because it has got meaning. It's not like pop art, where you just blow up images on to a wall and that's it. It's our art, our lives.

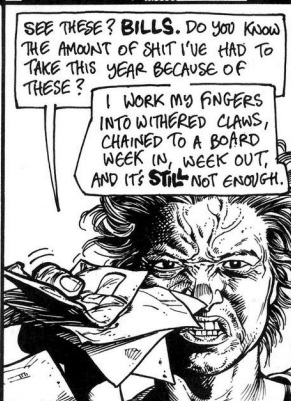
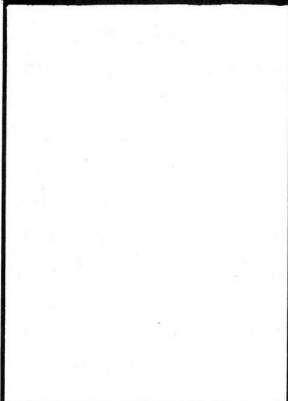
We wear our environment on ourselves. Instead of taking something and putting it somewhere, we just put it on ourselves. Like, you sit in a McDonalds, surrounded by plastic and multi-coloured gaudy furniture, but you're dressed in plastic and multi-coloured gaudy make-up. This is basically just a modern form of tribalism, respecting the world around you.

There is a tremendous irony in the book in the long run, because TechnoTribe are forced into a mass suicide by the villain. So the point that we're trying to make in the end is that people are killing their environment, their city. It's ecological, but subliminal.

*TechnoTribe. SuperCulture. A complete way of life and art. A fresh and new approach to comics.*

# PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A PSYCHOPATHIC BANKRUPT

BY GLENN  
 FABRY





# RICKY SLAUGETER

Elektra: Assassin, by Frank Miller and Bill Sienkiewicz (Epic Comics, £7.50).

A FRIEND AT work came in one morning singing the praises of *Angel Heart*, which he'd been to see the previous evening. "It's got lots of surrealistic violence," he said. "That's what I like in a movie." Hmmmm, I thought. Must lend him *Elektra: Assassin*.

This book is, as Sienkiewicz himself points out, essentially a Roadrunner cartoon: Elektra — indestructible Ninja assassin with some serious mind-control powers — pursued by Garrett, a US government agent who likes alcohol, large firearms and irritating his superiors.

The plot is roughly as follows: A presidential election is entering its final stages, with Democratic challenger Ken Wind looking likely to beat the incumbent. What Elektra knows (and Garrett initially doesn't) is that Wind is an agent of a nasty badguy demon called the Beast, who wants to trigger a nuclear war.

Up against Elektra (and later Garrett as well) is SHIELD, a super-technological CIA borrowed from the mainstream Marvel universe. Garrett is a creation of Extetchop, a renegade SHIELD division using cyborg and replacement surgery techniques to rebuild and give increased capacities to agents killed in the field.

Also chasing them is Perry, Garrett's former partner. Perry is a psychopath given unlimited destructive powers by Extetchop who then decides with demented glee that there might be more jollies in joining The Beast's side.

Garrett begins as a pretty straightforward parody of macho heroes — Sienkiewicz draws him throughout with impossibly wide shoulders. Elektra repeatedly makes a fool of him with contemptuous ease. But you'd have to be pretty posessed to dislike the guy, and he eventually emerges as the book's sole human character.

After all, once you have it in your head that Elektra is an assassin of incredible skill, there's not much else to know about her. Even the opening chapters' memories of her childhood and training are used largely as an excuse to show off her skills.

Any gentle souls who do see Garrett's drinking, swear-

ing and obsession with firearms as problematical will find nothing to comfort them in Miller's view of global politics. The incumbent president (who is given no name) is drawn as a shrivelled Nixon/Reagan clone, constantly clutching the button and saying, "I'll do it. I've got the guts. I'm the President."

Sienkiewicz uses only two xeroxed heads for Wind, no matter the pose of his body. Even when Wind — the ultimate plastic politician — is watching Perry tear Garrett's arm from its socket, he can't stop spouting polibabble: "A heartening gesture of support. Truly."

But this is all part of the book's black humour. Plunged into the Potomac River, Garrett and Elektra are attacked by Ninja accountants, complete with briefcases. Called upon to depict the machinery used in reconstructing Garrett, Sienkiewicz whips up a giant Heath Robinson style sewing machine.

When Garrett the gun freak goes to see SHIELD boss Nick Fury, Fury is enjoying some target practice with a gun so big he has to sit in the damn thing. Garrett wears SHIELD underwear. All the agency's state-of-the-art machines are supplied with steampipes.

Visually, the book is a stunning success. Sienkiewicz has painted each panel using his unique, half-cartooning style to give each moment maximum impact. In the story's darker moments, he conjures up some genuinely hellish scenes. One's first reaction on glancing at a Sienkiewicz page is to think, "Of course. Why doesn't everyone do it this way?" One's second reaction is to fall into a deep depression at the mediocrity of most mainstream comic book art.

Miller's narrative technique throughout is to use short, disjointed captions to get us inside the various characters' heads, broken up with some of the best stretches of dialogue in comics. Even where there are three sets of interconnecting thoughts tumbling over each other — as when Elektra possesses a girl called Sandy while still maintaining her mental link with Garrett — the story seldom becomes confusing.

Bouncing off each other, Miller and Sienkiewicz have produced something witty, sexy, violent, smart and really rather special. All this and Ninja accountants too. How can you resist it?

Elektra: Assassin is available at Forbidden Planet, 23 Denmark Street, London WC2.

# SNAPSHOTS



PHIL ELLIOTT  
'60-'87

"I ONCE WORKED IN A BAR  
AND SERVED THIS MAN A  
WHISKY.  
SOME YEARS LATER HE WAS  
DEAD."



ONE DAY I ALMOST DIED.  
HIT BY A CAR AND FLUNG  
HIGH INTO THE SKY.



SOME YEARS LATER I ALMOST  
DIED AGAIN."



BUT I  
DIGRESS.



"MY FORMATIVE YEARS..."



AND MY YEARS OF STRUGGLE."



I LAUGHED IN THE FACE OF  
ADVERSITY.



AND YES, THERE HAVE BEEN  
GOOD TIMES."



BUT MY TIME IS RUNNING OUT  
AND I MUST SAY FAREWELL  
FOR NOW. I THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR TIME.



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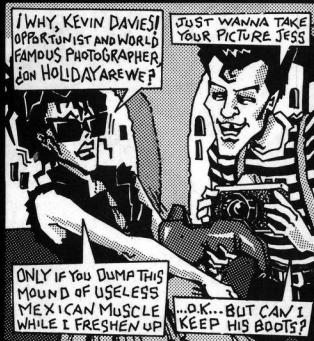
16 Mar 7.30 pm. Exeter Uni Comics Group, Nelson Mandela Room, Devonshire House, Exeter University.  
18 Mar, 5.00 pm. Timeslip, 17 Prudhoe Place, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.  
19 Mar, 12.30 pm. Science-Fiction Bookshop, 40 Westcrosscassway, Edinburgh  
19 Mar, 4.00 pm. A.K.A. Books & Comics, 33 Virginia St., Glasgow.  
25 Mar, 4.00 pm. Nostalgia & Comics, 14-16 Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham.  
26 Mar, 11.00 am. Nostalgia & Comics, 129 Middlewalk, Broadmarsh Shopping Centre, Nottingham.  
26 Mar, 3.00 pm. Nostalgia & Comics, Zodiac at Redgate, Farnwall Gate, Sheffield.  
2 & 3 April. Fellycom, Science Fiction Eastcon, Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool.  
2 April, 4.00 pm. Chapter One, 6 London Road, Liverpool.  
7 April, 8.00 pm. Warrington S.F. Group, The Wheelshaf, Orford Lane, Warrington.  
9 April, 11.00 am. Fantasyworld, 10 Market Sqr. Arcade, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.  
9 April, 3.00 pm. Another World, 23 Silver St., Leicester.  
13 April, 12.30 pm. Swansons Bookshop, 46 Fringergate, Preston.  
13 April, 8.30 pm. Preston S.F. Group, Uplands Room, The Stanley, Lancaster Road, Preston.  
16 April, 11.00 am. Odyssey, Unit 6, Harrison St., Old Year Lane, Leeds.  
16 April, 3.00 pm. Odyssey 7, Manchester University Precinct, Oxford Rd., Manchester.  
22 April, 4.00 pm. Fevered People, 38 Park St., Bristol.  
23 April, 11.00 am. The Comic Zone, 14 Harris Arcade, Station Rd., Reading.  
23 April, 3.00 pm. Farnham Place, 23 Denmark St., London.  
30 April, 1.00 pm. Thunder Road Comics, New Leaf Bookshop, 23 Bridge St., County Down, N. Ireland.  
2 May, 1.00 pm. Thunderbooks, 332 Lyham Rd., South Shore, Blackpool.  
6 May, 4.00 pm. House on the Borderland, 107B Cromwell Rd., Peterborough.  
7 May, 1.00 pm. American Comic Enterprises, 6 Museum St., Colchester.



# JES SAMY

**BOOK**  
PARKER/CALKIN 088

AS THE FALLEN ANGEL  
BITES THE DUST  
A BENT, ODOROUS  
FIGURE STEPS OUT  
OF THE DARK NITE...





WEAPONS BY FRICK+FRACK, SHOES BY HEELS OF LONDON  
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[AT LAST! COMPRENDO CASTANEDA, THE 'SECRET KNOWLEDGE'... THESE LINES ON YOUR UGLY MUG ARE THE PATHS TO WISDOM...AREN'T THEY?]



...GULP...WE HAVE NO TIME TO LOSE, I FOLLOW ME TO XILONEN!

IF YOU GOT IT!!  
IGUANA BREATH



VAMOS AHORA

WHAT'S E MEAN  
BADMOON RISING?

A SERIOUS CASUALTY OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE, HACKE CAN ONLY SPEAK IN "DINGBATS"...BUT, THANKS TO THE WORM JESSAMY IS THE 1<sup>ST</sup> TO UNDERSTAND



THEY, IS THAT A  
SEAR'S PONCHO?

...MONOTONE, MYSTICAL,  
MEXICAN, MUMBING...



WILD PAD YOU GOT HERE D.J...UH, I  
TAKE IT YOU'RE NOT VEGETARIAN...

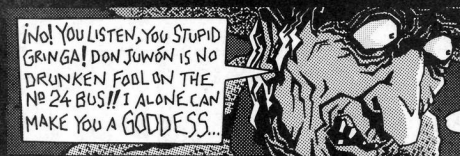
...WE MUST CARRY  
OUT THE RITUAL  
TO ABSORB THE  
SOUL SUBSTANCE  
THROUGH THE  
OFFERING...



YOU'VE BEEN YAPPING ALL BLUDDY MITE!  
I NOW SHUT UP AND LISTEN SMELLY...THIS  
BURN-OUT'S TALKING KOSMIC SECRETS!...

\*\*\*●□♦\*\*\*  
\*□●▲◆\*  
\*□♦▲▽+\*

...TO UITZILPOCHTLI,  
MIGHTY GOD OF WAR,  
THEN, THE POWER WILL  
BE MIN...UH...YOURS.



INO! YOU LISTEN, YOU STUPID  
GRINGA! DON JUWÓN IS NO  
DRUNKEN FOOL ON THE  
NO 24 BUS!! I ALONE CAN  
MAKE YOU A GODDESS...

MMM...COULD  
BE AMUSING

¿WHAT DO  
I HAVE  
TO DO?



YOU MUST OFFER A HUMAN SACRIFICE...CUT  
OUT THE HEART- HOLD IT, STILL BEATING- UP TO  
THE MOON, THEN CONSUME THE FLESH SO....

PITY, SEBASTIAN  
IS IN LONDON,  
I SUPPOSE IT  
CAN'T BE YOU  
PRUNE FACE,  
NOW...THAT  
LEAVES...

WILL JESSAMY BRUTALLY  
SACRIFICE HACKE TO THE  
GODS?! CAN JESSAMY  
RESIST DON JUWÓN'S  
TEMPTING PACKAGE?!  
OR IS THE OLD SOD FULL  
OF LIZARD GUANA?!



I WONDERED WHAT YOU WERE  
DOING IN THIS CARTOON...

Continued next issue...



# CLONING IN LEICESTER

AFTER 5 YEARS of research, pioneer Bob Smart has managed to successfully 'clone' one of England's most futuristic comic stores, 'Fantasy World', and produce 'Another World'. The 'clone' is a perfect replica, 'right down to the same excellent service, huge stocks and vast selection — which includes all the latest imports, (Marvel, D.C. and Independents), plus the best of the U.K., 2000 AD, VIZ, Escape, Dr Who, etc., with 1000's of back issues, going back to the early 1960's. They also have role playing games, T-shirts, badges, posters, science fiction and fantasy paperbacks, fantasy art books, film, rock, martial arts and body building books and magazines. Also a large section of supernatural and paranormal material including Tarot Cards!

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## FA HURTLES ON...



...YOU TWO LITTLE BIKES  
COOL OFF AND STOP FIGHTING  
OVER ME. IT IS NIGHT BEFORE  
CHRISTMAS... I'VE BEEN CRYING  
ENF LOUD...

WITH APOLOGUES TO D  
Bob Burden

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**BOB BURDEN**  
**& WILL EISNER**  
interviews +  
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typical Christmas  
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EDITOR: MARTIN SKIDMORE (0272) 644188

# MY LIFE IN COMICS

PAUL GAMBACINI

WHY DO PEOPLE like Howard Chaykin? It's unbelievable. He has a new graphic novel out, *Time<sup>2</sup>: The Satisfaction of Black Maria*. I just opened the book and the first phrase I saw was something of the order of "Jesus fuck a something". And I thought, this is over the mark. I am not religious in the denominational sense and I am not a prude when it comes to language, but I know that if a guy puts in a comic "Jesus fuck a something", he's only doing it to shock you. And that means it's the equivalent of a baby sitting in the middle of the floor to get attention. And I'm not interested in that.

What do I like? I try. There are some titles where I will buy the first ones. I bought the first *Spectre*, and I found it unreadable. I tried *Captain Atom*, and that went off the rails. I even tried *Blue Beetle* because there was such an interesting history to that character. He's the character that never made it. The incredible thing is, he's not made it now three times. Why do we keep bringing back these stiffies? At least *A Star Is Born* was a hit!

You were the number one fan when "fandom" didn't exist. Fandom today has a very large, loud and, some might say, unpleasant voice. What do you think of fandom today?

I don't know it. The only fan publications I get are the "professional" ones, like *The Comics Journal* and *Amazing Heroes*. Obviously you see shrewish opinions being expressed in many of these books. The hysteria about Jim Shooter that Gary Groth feels is very unbecoming; it's an embarrassment. The guy is doing a lot of good things, and to besmirch his own name by running a hate campaign against somebody who is not only down but out, it's beneath him.

But then, I know what it's like to have strong opinions about comics. I look back at when I was a kid and I must have had pus letters in a comic from every company at some point of another. I was a very vitriolic bastard. As a kid I was a Catholic and in that terrible American way there was a duality in everything. Good and bad. And if you weren't good, you were evil. There was no grey. So like if this comic wasn't good, it had to be real trash.

I wrote letters in to people which were well-written from a grammatical point of view for a kid my age, so they must have

● Continued on page 54

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Will Eisner

"The Spirit" © Will Eisner

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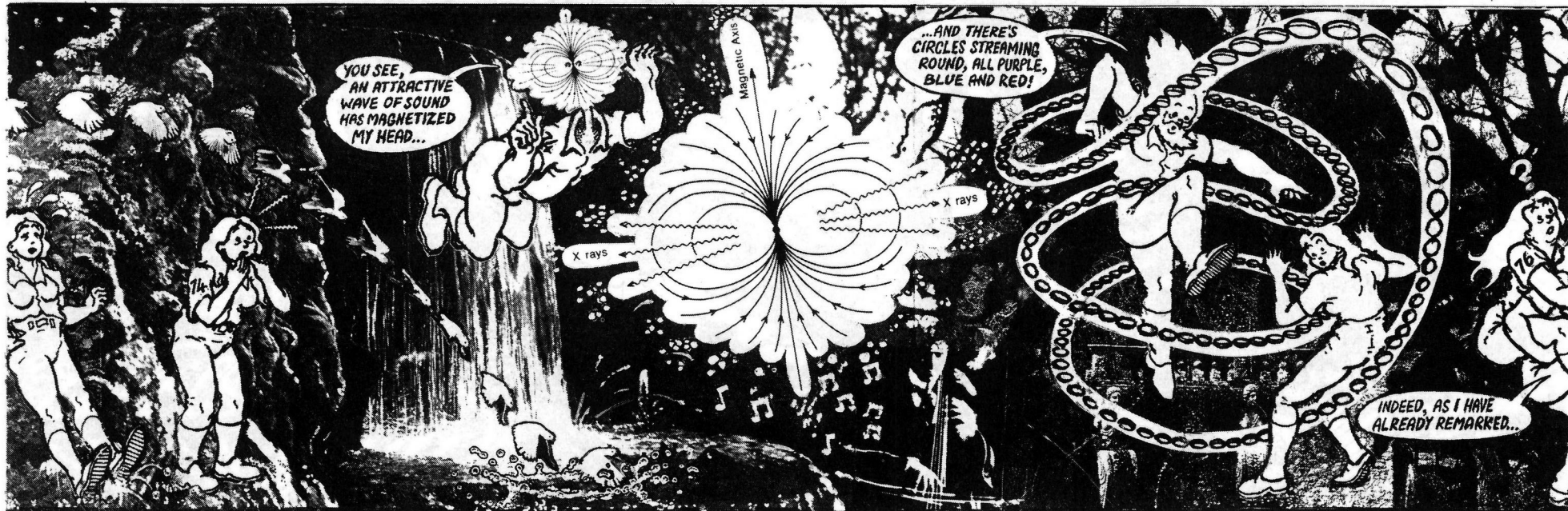
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# FASHION

FASHION HAS ALWAYS played a major part in the overall effect of the comic book medium. Imagine Batman without his mask or Superman without his instantly recognisable logo. Trevor Bailey has taken his cue from the fashion possibilities afforded by his favourite superheroes.

"The first comics I bought were Marvel," says Trevor. "Silver Surfer, Thor, that sort of thing. Comics didn't turn me on to drawing at first. I just liked the stories, it was something to escape into.

"But after a while, I started to copy some of the images in schoolbooks and things. When I got to college, I started to look for a style I could use to illustrate the things I was doing. About two years ago I had started buying comics again, and I realised that they were just the thing I was looking for.

"The thing about comic book superheroes is that clothes hang so well on them. They all have such big shoulders and tiny waists. And then there's the heavy lines and the whole futuristic look...

"I like to dress the Silver Surfer — he's just a blank image — and Moon Knight. The mysterious characters are the best because you can play around with them.

"I'd dress Clark Kent in Armani, with big padded shoulders. He's so American. Judge Dredd I see in padded leathers, but simple — he's so cluttered now."

Trevor has recently spent time in Italy, where he picked up some fashion tips from the masters. His designs met with considerable enthusiasm on his return to England.

Watch out for Trevor's T-shirts, ties and waistcoats — superheroes giving fashion a whole new identity!

HOTEL..

HEARTBREAK

# STRIP

WELL, THIS IS IT, MY BIG CHANCE...BUT WHERE DOES IT ALL START?

# PICTURES OF MATCHSTICK MEN...

© BERNARD CLAYD 1988



... SHE WAS ALWAYS IN HERE,  
JUST LOOKING AT THE PICTURES  
OF MATCHSTICK MEN...  
LOOKING KIND OF  
SAD...

SHE WAS  
BEAUTIFUL

GOD! HOW I'D LOVE TO ASK  
HER OUT... BUT I'M MUCH TOO  
SHY AND TOO FAT... SHE'D  
PROBABLY THINK I'M BORING  
ANYWAY AND...

HI!  
MIND IF I SIT  
DOWN?

RUN!

SMOKE?

ER...

...NO  
THANKS

I'VE OFTEN SEEN YOU  
IN HERE...

..DON'T YOU HAVE  
A JOB?

..ER..NO...



WE SEEMED TO GET ON REALLY WELL,.. SHE SEEMED ALMOST INTERESTED IN ME..



WE SEEMED TO BE THE PERFECT MATCH...

THEN, ONE DAY...

IT'S OVER...

Noo!!

...SHE LEFT ME TO  
GO OUT WITH SOME  
OLD FLAME OF HERS—  
SOME SKINNY HIPPIE  
WITH MATCHSTICK LEGS

I LOVED THAT  
GIRL...

WHY DID IT  
HAVE TO END..?

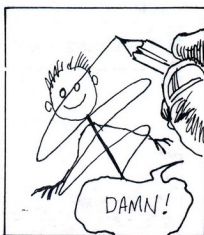
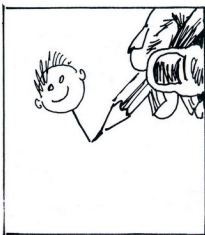
...AND NOW  
SHE'S GONE

OH WELL...

THAT NIGHT I DREAMT I WAS FAMOUS  
AND THAT SHE CAME BACK TO ME...



THAT DREAM...



..I CAN ONLY  
DRAW MATCHSTICK  
MEN...



IT WAS MY BROTHER,  
BACK HOME FROM  
HIS STAY AT  
COLLEGE

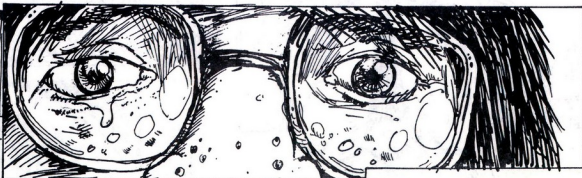


YEAH,.. I EVEN PRETENDED YOUR  
PAINTINGS WERE MINE IN THE  
HOPE THAT SHE'D FIND ME  
MORE INTERESTING...BUT...

PRATT



HMM...



MAYBE, ONE DAY...

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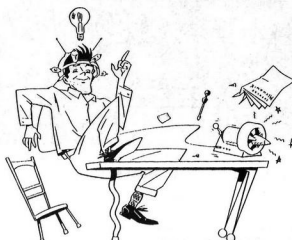
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Illustrated by **BRANDINE BAKER**

# ● From page 41

thought I was older than I was. As a matter of fact, I remember Mort Weisinger saying to me as I was about to go to Oxford, "I wondered about you. I wondered why somebody so intelligent was reading comics." I never forgot that. I mean, there was a guy who was short-selling his own product.

But I think a fully realised comic story is a beautiful thing. Whether it be that first Superboy/Bizarro, where Bizarro fell in love with the blind girl and the Bizarro was so upset when he realised the girl was blind, and that was the only reason she loved him. Or that she could not have loved him had she sight. He was so upset that he committed suicide. Well, I wouldn't say committed suicide, but engineered his own death by flying into Superboy at full speed and being blasted into smithereens.

**Only to return four issues later...**

Ah, yes. But you see, there was the sausage-factory approach to comics coming through. They suddenly realised that without knowing it they had come upon this genius character, and they brought him back as an adult as a comic figure. Totally different from the original Bizarro. The original Bizarro was a pathetic creature. I hope everybody can somehow get in touch with that original story. It was so moving.

This is the other great thing about those Alan Moore Superman stories. He brought Bizarro in. Obviously he had remembered Bizarro from the Mort Weisinger era, just as he had Krypto. But he had Bizarro go out in a way which was very realistic. He said, "Hahahahahaha! He realise the only way to be the true opposite of Superman who is alive is to be dead. Hahahahaha." And so he killed himself.

Alan is an artist, and he has the sensitivity of an artist. For example, the *Swamp Thing* which was a tribute to *Pogo* in which the alien spacecraft lands in the swamp, and the aliens come out, and it's like Albert the Alligator. That was so moving. You see, he respects comics. And this, ironically, is totally against the Mort Weisinger philosophy. To Alan Moore, a bright person can read comics.

Incidentally, I have to say I loved the first *Hellblazer*. I thought that idea was brilliant — that there could be a virus going around which caused you to obsessively eat the object of your greatest desires. So here's this pig, this human pig, this greedy businessman, goes into a restaurant and he has to eat everything. But even then he's not satisfied, and he goes over to this woman and starts eating her dress. One guy eats his comic collection. At the very end, the virus gets into a priest and you see him approaching the crucifix...

But the thing is, I find myself buying a lot of 1s and 2s because people say, "Oh, this is going to be good." But only rarely do I stick with it.

**Do you think the "industry" aspect of comics publishing has taken away the magic, or do you think that kids will always grow up turning to comics and there will be the same magic generation after generation?**

I think we are very foolish to think that successive generations will view different media in the same way. I have to look upon this in my own field. You don't have as many good young DJs as you had ten years ago. And why is that?

One reason is that we were the generation that grew up on rock and roll when it was new and exciting. This was the invention of the form. Prior to us, being a DJ was a very staid, almost Radio 4 type thing. So we had the excitement infused in us of the possibilities of a new form.

By the time that people who are 22 years old now started listening, say, it would have been the early 70s. It would have been in place. Much of the exciting work had already been done. Even

now, if people are asked to discuss the history of popular music radio they'll go back to the beginning and say, "Well, there was pirate radio and then Tony Blackburn opened Radio 1."

Now, a young person who wants to be a broadcaster is more likely to want to be on television. But not even to be on television in a way that I consider to be artistically interesting, but just to be present on television. You have all these Saturday morning series now, all of this children's stuff and stuff that's on late at night, in which there's no attempt to develop what would be called "broadcasting skills" before they go on the air. They just go on the air and be personalities.

But it's moved so quickly that being on television is no longer a special thing. As recently as ten years ago, when I first started being on television, it was a big thing because there was so little television. And it was almost invariably special because only something that had been worked hard on would get on.

Now, there are people on TV you don't even know who they are. Which makes, in a sense, the achievement of Jonathan [Ross] that much more distinctive because not only does he appear good on it, but he's a master of the form. Or at least, he thinks in terms of the broadcast product and how it is perceived. And he's got far more going on upstairs than 95 per cent of the people his own age that are on TV. And he stands out not only because, A, he is very good, but B, because no one else his age is.

What I'm saying is that popular culture changes. At a rapid speed. Comic strips were huge in the first fifty years of this century. I mean, that's what TV really killed. You don't have your Hal Fosters or Alex Raymond or anything now. No one wants to do it. And the newspapers now devote less space to comics. The panels are smaller, the reproduction is poorer, they're not in colour for the most part. So that form peaked in the thirties. And comic books peaked... as children's entertainment they peaked in the 40s, and then, as the superhero age, they peaked in the 60s.

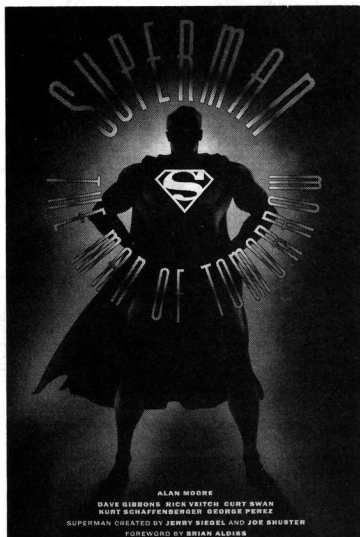
It's not surprising that we're getting graphic novels now, because your 32-page comic book has got to be a bad buy. The people who are most interested in comics now are just older than they used to be, and they'll want either one of those more expensive comics or a graphic novel.

Things change. What will happen next? I don't know. But something will because it always has. And what will happen always depends on what technology makes possible at that time and what the geniuses of that moment in popular culture want to do.

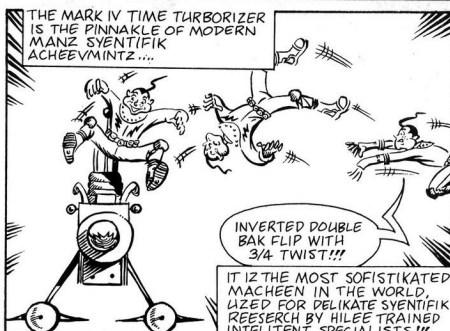
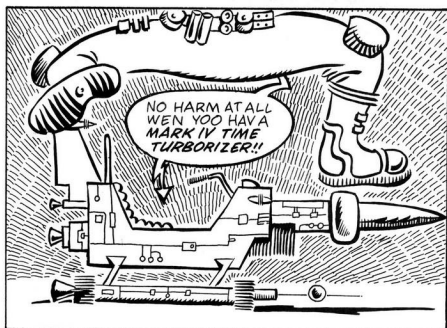
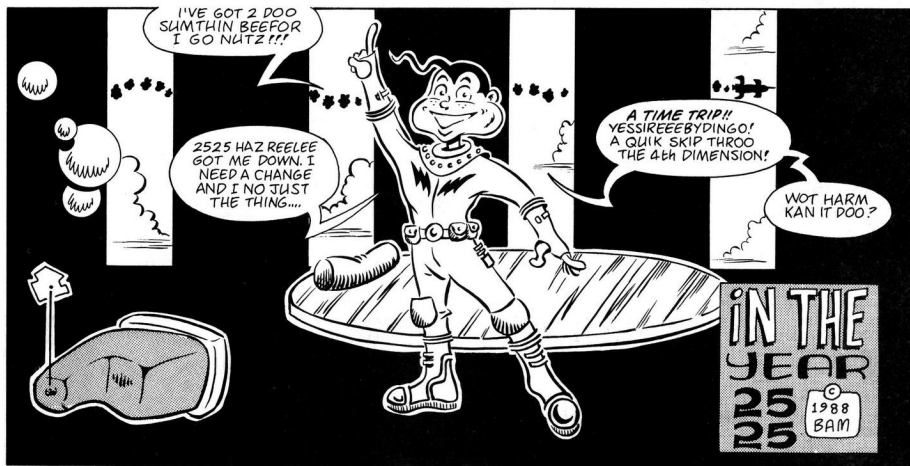
Look at pop videos. They've already peaked. The best work in that field has already been done. In television, the best work was done in the 50s. It was the birth of the medium, so all the great creative talents said, "Let's do something in this." And because the money men didn't know what would make money, they let everything happen. And only when they found out that people like quiz shows and situation comedies did they emphasise those.

In the early days of comics, you had everything. And when people found out that superheroes sold, you lost Westerns, you lost Horror, you lost Love, you lost a hell of a lot of Humour...

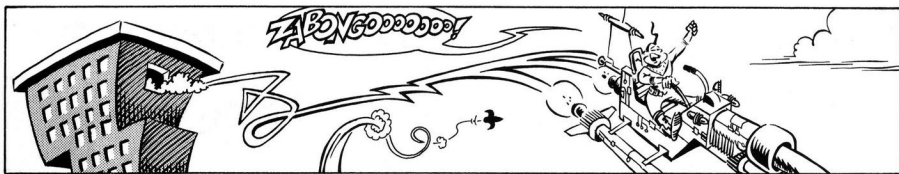
And that's what happens with every medium. Now there will never cease to be the need to hear music, so radio will continue. There will never be a cessation of people's desire to read graphic stories. But what changes is the way in which they're delivered. Which brings us to the end of the Gambaccini tape. Transcribed by Lionel. Dinner by Don. And for those of you who want to check out that original Superboy/Bizarro story, it's reprinted in *The Greatest Superman Stories Ever Told*, a 335-page hardback anthology published by DC and available from Virgin Comics for £14.95.



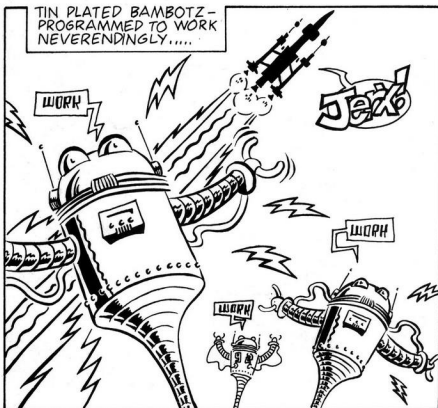
Alan Moore's Superman stories, collected in one volume. From Titan Books, £5.95.



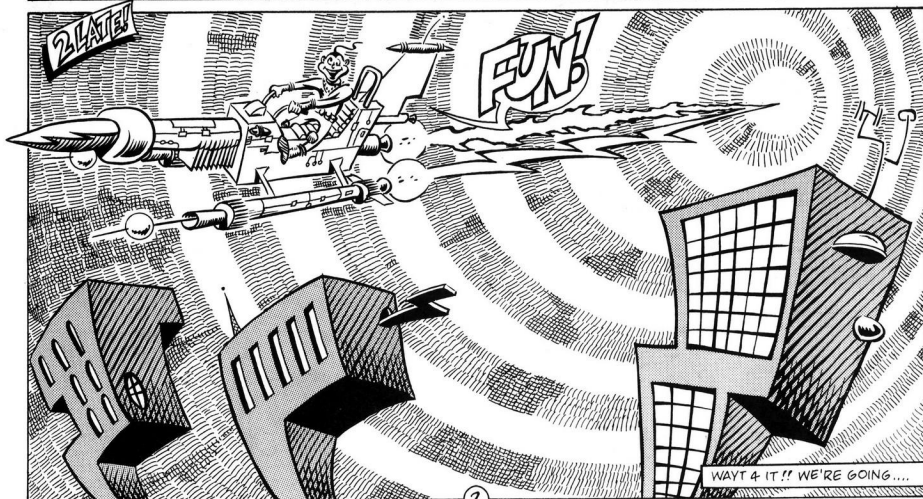
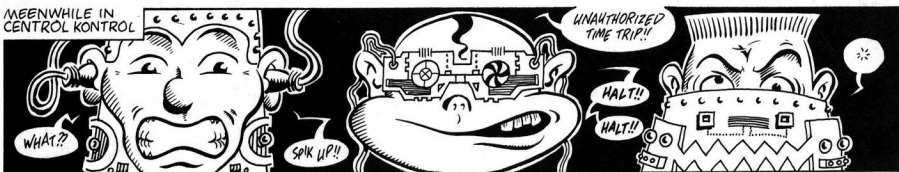


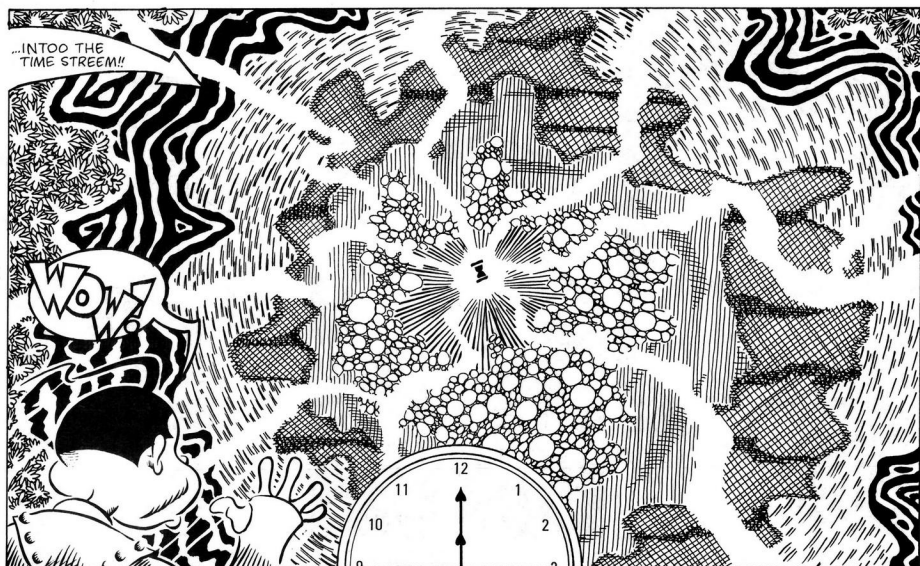


TIN PLATED BAMBOTZ -  
PROGRAMMED TO WORK  
NEVERENDINGLY.....

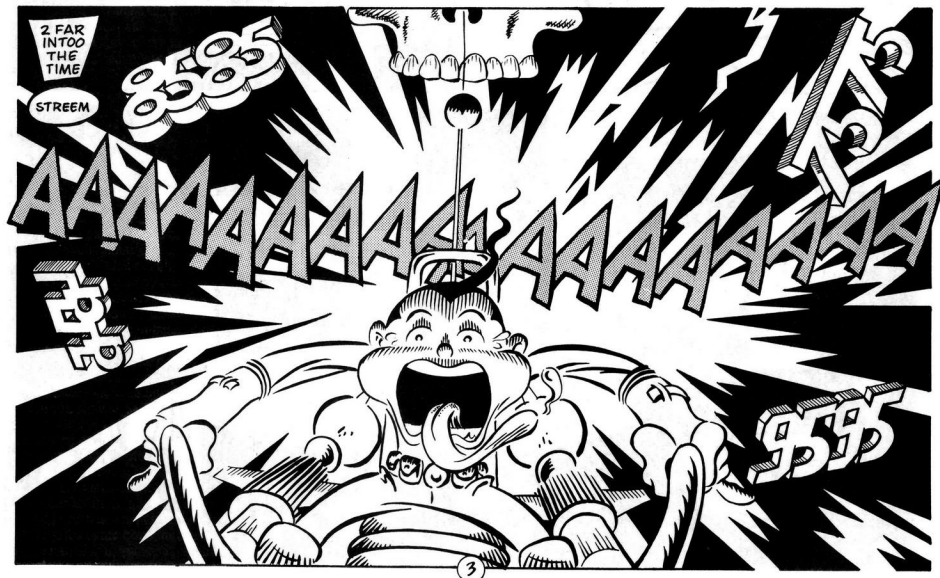
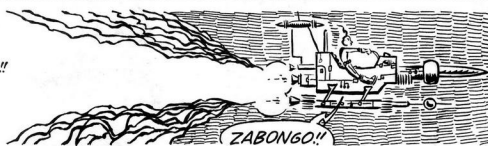


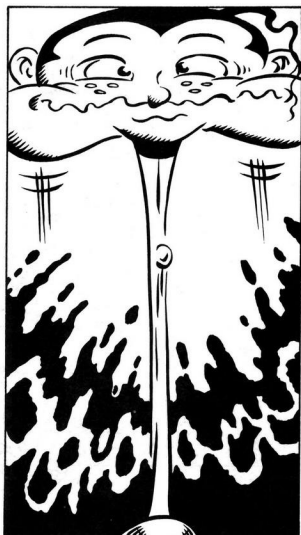
MEENWHILE IN  
CENTRAL KONTROL





FURTHER INTOO THE TIME STREAM!!





# MADNESS BY DESIGN

IT'S NO SURPRISE to see Dave Gibbons succumb to madness after *Watchmen*. Or rather, The Madness, definite article firmly in place.

The new-look The Madness has just burst on to the music scene. The definite article is by the group, the image is by Dave Gibbons.

Chris Foreman, who has been reading comics "since I began to read", came up with the idea of developing a logo to represent the band. "Photos are such a pain," says Chris. "You never know what you end up looking

like. I wanted to use a symbol to illustrate each single instead of a photo session."

The artist he chose was Dave Gibbons. "They liked the symbolism in *Watchmen*," says Dave. "The smiley face, the radiation sign, the skull and crossbones.

"They wanted a harder image for the group, something more like a group on an indie label. To get that harder edge, we decided the images should be like those warning symbols you see on lorries for things like hydrochloric acid. They lent me the tape, and I came up with a unifying theme: stylized faces with different elements for eyes and mouths and so on.

"There's also an element of optical illusion in them — you don't only have the face, but also another image in profile. I wanted them to be optically active."

Dave's rough designs were finished by Rian Hughes. Rian, who has recently had a show of his work at Cafe Casbar in Covent Garden, is well-known for his stylized illustrations and design talents.

"We worked out the typography together," says Dave, "but all the technical things I'm no good at, Rian did. When it comes down to man-hours, Rian's spent a lot more time on it than I have."

Dave's work for The Madness is not his first

foray into musical illustration. "I did a comic strip for a Jethro Tull album back in '75 or '76, but that was an actual strip that ran across a gatefold sleeve, so it was more illustrative rather than design work."

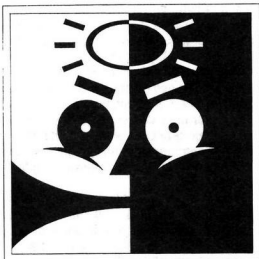
However, design has always been a major element of Dave's work. "The whole 'look' of *Watchmen* was my design. Design comes quite easily to me. But I also find that I'm becoming more interested in it. The actual execution of the drawing matters less and less, while the compositional element is becoming more and more important."

Since working with The Madness, Dave has moved on to work with another band, Bomb the Bass. "What happened was I'd noticed they'd 'sampled' — to use the right word — the smiley-face logo from *Watchmen*. I didn't want to make a legal issue out of it, but I had Titan track them down to let them know that this image was copyrighted and they could end up with some trouble.

"Bomb the Bass then got in touch with me and they were most apologetic. They'd meant it as an homage and were not aware of the legal implications. When we got to talking they expressed an interest in — and a knowledge of — my early work. And what's come out of it is that I'm now doing designs and a comic strip for their album.

"The thing that fascinates me about it is that it's such a different placement for a comic strip. And the whole way that the smiley-face logo is now being used — it seems that the pulse of popular culture is beating our way. And it's certainly given me a different appreciation of how comics can fit into the scheme of things."

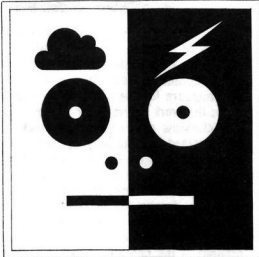
● Win a record in another fab *Heartbreak Hotel* competition. We're giving away a copy of *Hip Hop and Rapping in the House*, a truly great compilation album just released by Stylus Records. To win it, ponder and then reply to the following: the Fat Boys and the Beach Boys recently teamed up to have a hit with the song *Wipe Out*. Who performed that song originally? Competition deadline is April 30. All the usual rules apply. Chill.



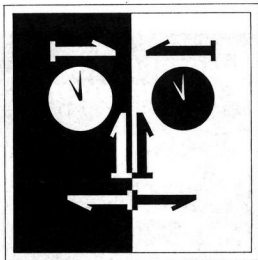
Gabriel's Horn



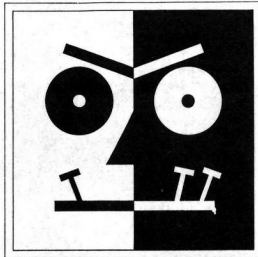
Nightmare Nightmare



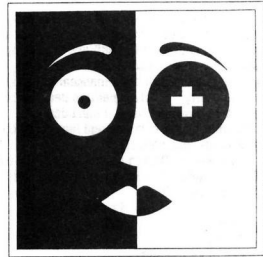
Thunder & Lightning



11th Hour



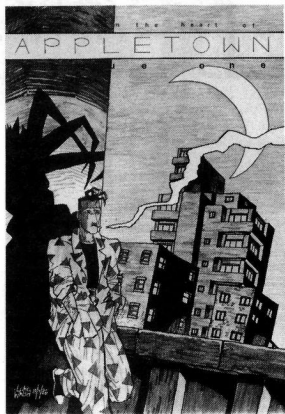
Nail down the days



Beat the Bride



# THE WORKS



## Appletown rising

"BEING A SUPERHERO is a pain," says Luke Walsh. "All my life my superior intellect and amazing powers have isolated me from humanity. But let me 'unmask', as it were. Let me discard the abilities that set me apart from my fellow species and share with you . . . my humanity"

Living in Liverpool with his girlfriend and two children, Luke is trying to start up a business as a designer (posters, records, etc) and a comics writer/artist.

"It seems that comics are undergoing a change. As they move closer to readers' interests, they have been granted recognition by the culture they reflect. This is something that has been long overdue in the UK, which has, until recently, blinkered itself from developments in the comics medium in Europe and the US. Perhaps this isolation has given birth to and bred some of the weirdos that do comics in the UK."

"In my own work, I try to disrupt the essential machinery that enables one to read it in order to evoke an unidentifiable atmosphere of simultaneous disorientation and *déjà vu*. Weird, huh?"

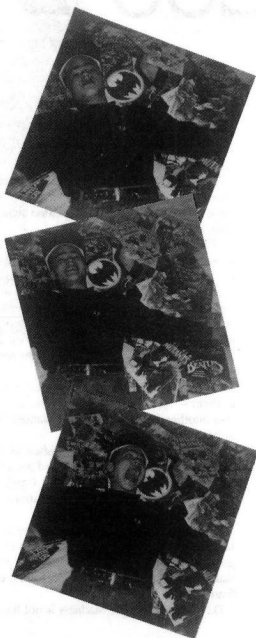
"I'm very defensive about myself and my work. I'm basically frightened of cynicism and go all out to destroy it. I will use everything within my power to wipe out this evil that infests the minds of once-innocent citizens!"

"Uh, sorry . . . My superhero persona has begun re-asserting itself. I must don my inflatable plastic costume and leap a tall bullet in a single locomotive."

Luke Walsh. Design co-ordinator. Tall, dark, Celtic origins. 23. Sagittarian/Dragon. Work currently available:

Appletown # 4 (A4, 44 pages)  
£1.25 plus S.A.E., from  
40 Marmon Road  
Liverpool L17 8TX.

## Wonder boy



FELIX HOWARD HAS met all the glamorous people, been seen in every high-fashion mag, presented *The Tube*, starred in a Madonna video . . . and is an avid comics reader.

"I was brought up on comics. I always used to nick my father's old, very valuable first *Blackhawks* and tear them to shreds. I find it irritating when I say to someone, 'Hey, here's this really great book' and they can't really relate to it 'coz it's in comic form."

When he's not modeling — or reading comics — Felix is busy with school. But his opinion of the British educational system is not very high.

"Things going on in schools are ridiculous now. You go to the park, you have a spliff. You go into the flats, have a tab, go back to school and the teacher has four heads. I mean, not me . . . There is too much open unawareness. Call me old-fashioned — an old-fashioned 15-year-old — but I do believe in discipline. There has to be discipline in schools."

The other love of Felix's life at the moment is music. "At the moment it's very loose. I get together with four of my friends and we sit down and have a jam. I can't really be serious about it now. Give me eight months and maybe I'll get something in the can."

Acting holds little interest for him, and he is scornful of those models who profess to be actors. "There's no acting at all in modeling. You either look hard or you look stupid. Stupid is good for catalogue work, and stupid is good for milk commercials, things like that. Hard is looking severely mean while wearing half-good clothes."

"As for the next kid that comes along — and I think there will be a 'next kid' — and does a couple of videos, good luck to him or her. I'm just jamming with my guys. I've got a girlfriend. I'm 15 in '88."

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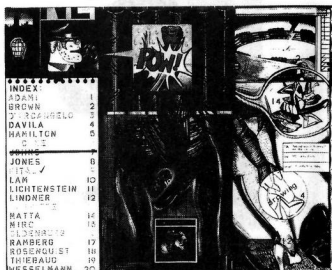
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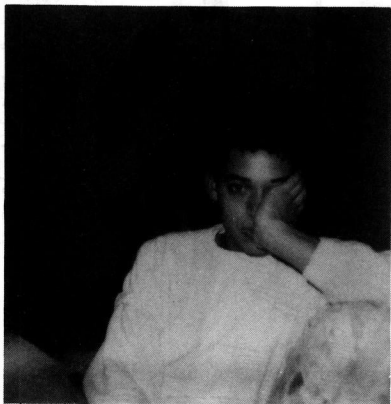
April 16  
Mean Fiddler  
28A High Street  
Harlesden  
London NW10



THE ART OF Juan Davila is a stinging critique of painting, Australian culture and the international institution of art. Widely appreciated, debated and exhibited, Juan Davila's art now appears for the first time in book form.

"In the work before 1979," says the artist in the interview which opens the book, "I used the postcard and the playing card as a format and a parody of the frame in painting. To that I brought the banality and artifice of kitsch reproduction of nudes through parodies, allegories, and substitution procedures."

"In the painting *Emergency Exit* of 1979, I made a change of format to the comic strip and brought in the concept of cultural quotation. It



## Model artist

**WHAT HIS BROTHER Nick did for launderettes and boxer shorts is being rapidly eclipsed by Barry Kamen's fast-growing fame as a fine artist. Barry's first exhibition has just taken place at the Black Bull Bar and Gallery — an exhibition that was well-received by critics and public alike, as evidenced by the fact that most of the works were sold.**

**Barry's previous employment has been in a business that seems to attract members of his family — modelling. "The show is a mixture of all the work I have done while travelling," says Barry.**

**"After I stopped travelling, I spent about a year just piecing together my old stuff and my new work to create the show. On some of the pieces, I could only get that old, beaten, parchment look by soaking some nice handmade paper in tea. My influences are mainly classical — Michelangelo, Byzantine, Greek and Russian art — mixed with some tribal effects."**

**The "tea" illustrations attracted the most attention from the viewers. In their huge, gilt, handmade frames, they give off the glow of a warm, golden summer beach as the sun sets. These golden glows contrast sharply with the black and white pieces in the show — strong images reflecting Barry's boxing days.**

**Barry's work has also found its way into a number of magazines as illustrations. He also did the cover of STRIP AIDS and, on the cover of the first issue of Heartbreak Hotel, he captured perfectly the urban alienation of "Teen Angels in Anguish". There is one thing that Barry hasn't done yet, and that's comics. But that is soon to be put right, so keep your eyes glued to Heartbreak Hotel for more from the multi-faceted Barry Kamen.**

## FROM ROCKY TO ROCK STAR

### A matter of Time

BORN IN EAST London, 27-year-old David Ian is starring in Dave Clark's musical *Time*, at the Dominion Theatre in London's West End. He has taken up the role of "The Rock Star", previously played by Cliff Richard and David Cassidy.

"A lot of people have said to me, 'Oh, you're taking over from them and that determines how

you play the part'. Well, yes, the direction and the settings are determined, but I play the part very differently from the two of them.

"I've had letters from people that say they came to see Cliff in the show, and when they came again and saw me, they enjoyed the show, and got the message of it, which they hadn't got the first time 'coz they'd spent a couple of hours going, 'Bloody Hell! That's Cliff standing three yards in front of my face'. So when I play the part, Chris Wilder exists for a while."

Chris comes to the theatre from a musical background. "I did Song for Europe. I was in a group called Jump. I must admit that the biggest enticement of it all was that I got my Equity card, because it's practically impossible to get

one these days. Having said that, I had a ball.

"Eurovision used to be very big news. Up until and including Bucks Fizz, our entry was a star. But you tell me who our entries have been since '81, which was Bucks Fizz, and you can't name one. In Europe it's still big news, but I question these days that even if a British act won whether it would hold any credibility in this country whatsoever.

"Before *Time*, I was with *The Rocky Horror Show* for eight months playing Rocky and I loved it. But I would be lying if I said I loved it every night. With the audience participation you would get some horrific nights.

"You can stand there and be belted with rice and squirted with water and have the audience going berserk and think, 'Wow, this is fantastic. It's like being in Duran Duran or Wham.'"

"But then there's another night when you'll duck something and you'll pick up an orange with four nails coming out of it. You are so exposed standing up there in a stupid costume. At the end of the day, the fans presume that you think it is as wonderful as they do. But they're only there for one night and you have to go on again the next day.

"After *Time*, I would like to do something other than a musical. The trouble in this business is that if you do a musical, you get offers to do other musicals and it's very difficult to be seen as anything other than a musical actor."



was not a break with the previous work, but a use of more efficient tools to convey the problem.

"The comic strip denies illusion in the sense that all the elements are in the open, including the code for reading them, and does not distinguish between form and content."

Davila's work is also highly sexual. There was a scandal in Australia when police closed down one of his shows, calling it pornography.

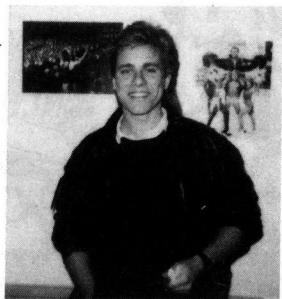
"I was not interested in pornography *per se*, or in the notion of genital love or in the denunciation of exploitation, but in the effects created when pornography was switched from

its original place, the porn shop, to a context that would never accept it.

"Pornographic techniques applied to the nude in painting reveal, fragment and reframe the body, reversing its idealised humanistic depiction. Pornography transferred to painting permits two things: the showing of what has never been represented and the debasing of the idea of high art by bringing popular materials to it."

*Hysterical Tears* is available from:

GMP Publishers,  
PO Box 247,  
London N15 6RW  
Hardback, £14.95; paper, £8.95.





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PRINTED IN ENGLAND

1st APRIL 1988

This issue's limited edition flexidisc is *SYMMETRICAL*, by THE LAST LAUGH.  
For more information about THE LAST LAUGH, contact HEARTBREAK HOTEL.

# THE LAST LAUGH

# CATCH THE WIND

I HAD BEEN OVER AT ANDY'S PLACE, TALKING ABOUT OUR COLLEGE DAYS-PARTIES OLD GIRLFRIENDS AND STUFF, WHEN HE MENTIONED A BEACH-PARTY WHICH I COULD BARELY REMEMBER UNTIL HE PULLED OUT A COUPLE OF OLD PHOTOS...



THE FIRST SHOWED A GROUP OF FIGURES ON A BEACH AT SUNSET. ONE OF THEM MUST HAVE BEEN ME. I SEEM TO REMEMBER I WAS WITH A GIRL CALLED CAROLINE ... OR WAS THAT ANOTHER PARTY...? IT'S ALL KIND OF HAZY..THE SECOND PHOTO REALLY SHOOK ME UP... ALL THOSE FORGOTTEN FACES SUDDENLY BROUGHT INTO FOCUS BY A FLASH FROM TWENTY YEARS AGO.



I CAN REMEMBER THEIR NAMES CLEARLY ALTHOUGH I'VE BARELY SEEN THEM SINCE... MIKEY, SHAG (NAMED FOR HIS APPEARANCE RATHER THAN HIS SEX-LIFE)...ANGELINE -WHO LIKED TO BE CALLED ANGEL- SANDY, AND DYLAN OUR RESIDENT POET..." GOD ! I REMEMBER NOW ... ALL THOSE AWFUL PRETENTIOUS, DEPRESSING SONGS ..WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO HIM..TO ALL OF THEM?"





ANDY HAD KEPT IN TOUCH WITH THE OLD CROWD MORE THAN ME. MIKEY, HE SAID, HAD PURSUED HIS INTEREST IN BEER, BIKES AND WILD PARTIES—JOINED AN ANGELS CHAPTER IN DEVON. HE'D DONE TIME FOR DEALING AND STOLEN CARS. THEN HE'D COME OFF HIS BIKE AND WRECKED HIS LEG SO HE COULDN'T RIDE ANY MORE. THAT HAD CALMED HIM DOWN A BIT AND HE'D GOTTEN MARRIED... LAST ANDY HEARD HE'D JUST HAD HIS THIRD KID AND WAS RUNNING A REPAIR SHOP IN EXETER---



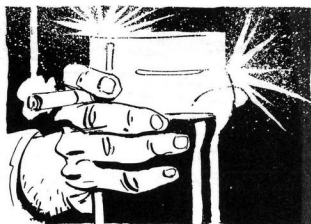
ANGELINE? ... WELL NOW SHE WAS A SAD CASE ... AFTER COLLEGE SHE'D GIVEN UP HER ASPIRATION TO JOIN THE PEACE CORPS AND TRAVEL THE WORLD ... SHE HAD MARRIED A SURGEON ... ANDY WENT TO A BARBECUE AT THEIR COUNTRY-HOUSE ONCE. ANGEL HAD BECOME FAT AND LOUD AND BOASTFUL AND HAD EVEN SUGGESTED TO ANDY THAT WASN'T IT TIME HE FOUND A JOB.. AFTER ALL IT WAS HER TAXES THAT PAID FOR HIS DOLE ... HA HA ... JUST JOKING OF COURSE ... OF COURSE ANGEL ... GOODBYE ANGEL ...

SO WHAT ABOUT SHAG? HE AND ANGEL HAD A REAL THING GOING BACK THEN ... "YOU NEVER HEARD WHAT HAPPENED?!" SAYS ANDY... NO, I NEVER DID HEAR THAT ANGEL GOT PREGNANT AND HAD THE BABY ADOPTED BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T WANT TO RUIN HER CHANCE TO TRAVEL THE WORLD. SHE HAD LEFT SHAG BEFORE THE BABY WAS BORN. SHAG HAD WORKED IN A FACTORY FOR A WHILE. NOW HE WRITES FOR AN ENVIRONMENT PAPER AND IS THINKING OF RUNNING FOR THE GREEN PARTY. HE CALLS HIMSELF COLIN THESE DAYS...



THEIR BABY HAD GROWN UP WITH ADOPTIVE PARENTS ... WHEN HE WAS SIXTEEN HE HAD TRACKED THEM DOWN. HIS FATHER WELCOMED HIM WITH OPEN ARMS. ANGELINE HAD SLAMMED THE DOOR IN HIS FACE. NOW HE LIVES IN A SQUAT IN SOUTH LONDON AND NEVER SEES EITHER OF THEM. HIS FATHER, HE SAYS, IS AN AGING HIPPIE AND A PRAT, HIS MOTHER - A BOURGEOISE COW. THIS, HIS FATHER INSISTS, IS A VERY HEALTHY ATTITUDE ----

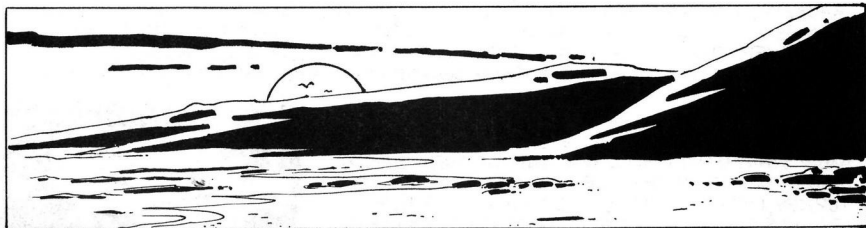
.... AND THEN THERE WERE SANDY AND DYLAN. ANDY STARED INTO HIS BEER AND SIGHED.. SANDY AND DYLAN TOOK THE HIPPIE TRAIL TO MOROCCO, TURKEY, INDIA ... AT SOME POINT IN THEIR TRAVELS DYLAN HAD BEEN ARRESTED AND HIS PARENTS HAD TO SELL THEIR HOUSE TO BAIL HIM OUT... BY THE TIME THEY GOT HIM HOME HE WAS TOTALLY SCREWED UP. HE GOT INTO SCIENTOLOGY THEN WENT ON AN ACID-BINGE... MOSTLY BAD TRIPS.



SANDY HAD STUCK WITH HIM, EVEN AFTER SHE HAD A MISCARRIAGE WHEN HE KNOCKED HER DOWN A FLIGHT OF STAIRS .... NO ONE WAS SURE WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN THE END. THE POLICE RECKON SHE PROBABLY WENT AT HIM WITH A KITCHEN KNIFE ... SO IT COULD HAVE BEEN SELF-DEFENSE. THE ONLY PERSON WHO REALLY KNOWS IS DYLAN ... AND HE HASN'T SPOKEN A WORD SINCE THAT DAY...



A WEEK OR SO AFTER MY CONVERSATION WITH ANDY, I DROVE DOWN TO THE WEST COUNTRY AND FOUND THE BEACH AGAIN. ALTHOUGH IT WAS THE HEIGHT OF SUMMER, THE BEACH WAS DESERTED. I ASKED AT A LOCAL PUB WHERE THEY TOLD ME THAT GREENPEACE HAD TAKEN READINGS ON THE BEACH AND FOUND SEVERAL HOT-SPOTS. I.T.V. DID A PROGRAMME SOON AFTER ON THE INCIDENCE OF LEUKEMIA IN THE AREA.. AFTER THAT THE TOURISM HAD GRADUALLY DROPPED OFF TO ALMOST NOTHING, AND THE LOCALS NEVER WENT NEAR THE BEACH ....



BUT RADIATION IS INVISIBLE, AND AT SUNSET THE PLACE STILL LOOKS AS SERENE AND BEAUTIFUL AS EVER .....

- DYLAN - '91

# SECOND CITY LIFE

*Who or what is The Fish and where is its spawning ground? All is revealed in this issue's report from Birmingham.*

EARLY BEANO. TINTIN. The fifties. The Smiths and Morrissey's lyrics. So reads the list of influences of editors James Hanlon and Mark Wilson, the brains behind *The Fish* (the fish-brains?).

*The Fish*, circulation three hundred, has been swimming around for over a year in various Virgin Megastores and London's Comic Showcase. Wider distribution would probably mean far greater sales, as reaction so far has been very positive.

This bi-monthly comic's surreal-sounding title carries no profound allusions. It was chosen — "because it has no meaning whatsoever" — from the menu in a Caribbean restaurant.

The magazine is produced at Fish House, a monument to kitsch objects and the inspiration for many of the images in the melancholy humour of James' own work — hot-water bottles, dummies and false teeth. Mark, on the other hand, has taken a more traditional cartoon format and developed a character called Useless Dancer.

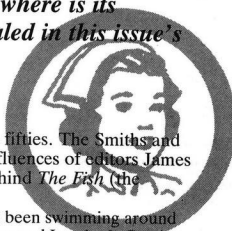
While the design has evolved, the basic philosophy remains the same, as James explains: "We felt there was a need for something a bit more intelligent that would still be fun but try to raise serious issues too. We are looking for a specific graphic style and material that is very British. It's meant to be a forum for new artists, but a lot of the work has been from people trying their hands at Rambo strips, which isn't right for us."

It's interesting to reflect that neither James nor Mark is an avid reader of comics, which probably accounts for *The Fish*'s originality. "We started *The Fish* because we wanted to do something positive," says Mark. "It's a labour of love." They see *The Fish* as a refreshing alternative to the toilet humour of many publications and believe that there is a new breed of comic-reader to cater for: "People who are interested in a good read and good graphics."

Will *The Fish* be the first British coffee-table comic? James and Mark would like to produce something like *Raw* but lack of funds prohibits it for the time being. However, by the end of the year they hope to have set up a network of contributors and increased the circulation in order to attract advertisers. They also want to produce other publications, says James, with an emphasis on banality: "Like *Hair-Dryer Design*. That would give me a deep thrill!"

*The Fish* is proof that it is possible to produce a high-quality individualistic comic without a lot of cash and it deserves every success.

For a copy of *The Fish*, pester your local comic shop to stock it or send £K50 (£1.00 plus 50 p.p.p) to Fish House, 14 Birchwood Crescent, Spakbrook, Birmingham B12 8BN.

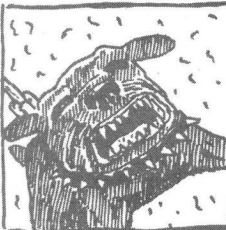
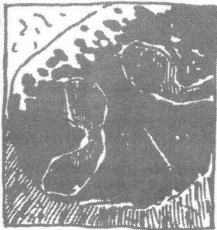


## THE FISH



Little Pets

Th 2 k 1000 30 y !!



Kate Rock

People who own dogs like this would probably like to wear guns.  
J A M E S H A N L O N



# TRINA ROBBINS HITS THE MARK

**Ms Melinda Gebbie**  
Formerly of San Francisco  
Currently residing in London



**BAD NEWS FROM the Home Front** today, Melinda. The rare and endangered species of woman cartoonist has lost a prominent member. Dori Seda died yesterday.

You've been off in Europe being continental for some time now, but I know you could never forget Dori. She was the tall crazy one, born with a cigarette in her mouth. The one who couldn't laugh without having a coughing fit. And Dori laughed a lot!

Like you, Dori started as a fine artist — a truly fine one, inspired by Ivan Albright — but after eight years during which she was unable to sell one painting, she turned to comics. She was part of the second generation of *Wimmen's Comix*, co-editing number 11 along with her best friend, Krystyne Krytyrre.

Her stories, all incredibly funny self-portraits, appeared in *Weirdo*, *Prime Cuts*, *Cannibal Romance*, *Viper*, *San Francisco Comic Book*, *Yellow Silk*, *Ripoff Comics* and her own *Lonely Nights*.

I don't know how many of these titles made it across the Atlantic to the UK. I hope at least some of them did. I do know that *Lonely Nights*, described by Neil Gaiman in last issue's *Samizdat* as "probably the most interesting and personal underground comic in years", was banned by Customs. Dori would have been delighted to know this. She liked to cause trouble.

For the lucky few in the UK who've somehow gotten hold of Dori's comics, I can tell you that everything she says about her dog is true.

I first met Dori when she was the "Vampire Bookkeeper", working on the books at Last Gasp from 7pm until about 3 or 4 in the morning because her chronic insomnia wouldn't allow her to keep normal hours. We returned to her apartment after dinner one night and I dropped my leopard-skin fake fur coat on to her sofa, then followed her into the kitchen for coffee. When we re-entered the living

room, there stood her infamous dog Tona with my coat in his mouth. He was eating it!

Dori snatched it from his jaws and returned it to me. It smelled like bad dog and looked like a dead cat. Poor Dori felt terrible about it and insisted on mending the coat for me. I still have the coat, and now I can look at the neat little patch and think of her.

We've had a killer flu going around this month. It puts you out of commission for at least a week, but you've got to be in really rotten physical shape to actually die from it. That's what got Dori.

On Friday, February 19 — the day she woke up with her first flu symptoms — Dori and Don Donahue, (with whom she lived) were in the back seat of a car being driven by a friend. The driver lost control of the steering and crashed into a guard rail. Dori, the only person wearing a seat belt, was also the only person injured, sustaining hairline fractures of her hip and shoulder-blade.

The accident most certainly didn't help, and probably worsened, her already fragile state of health. The virus quickly settled into the most vulnerable part of Dori's body: her already-decimated lungs. By the following Thursday her cough had gotten so bad that she couldn't sleep, and at approximately 1pm, Friday, February 26, Dori stopped breathing. She was thirty-six years old.

A bunch of us got together at a local bar that night, just to be together and to talk about Dori. You should've been there. Only you know what bothered me? Half the people there were smoking.

We miss you, but you're only an ocean away. Dori's gone too far to come back now.

Of course, the gap between her teeth will live forever.

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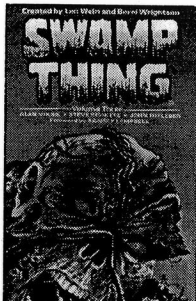
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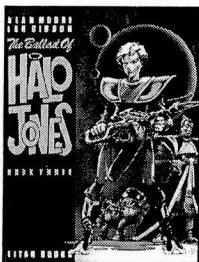
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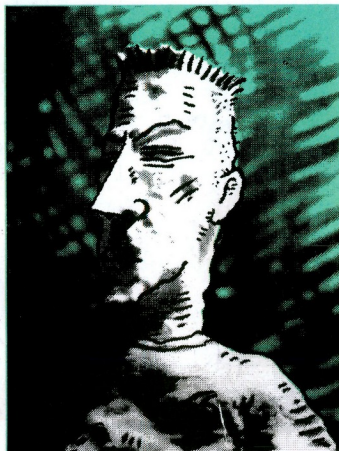
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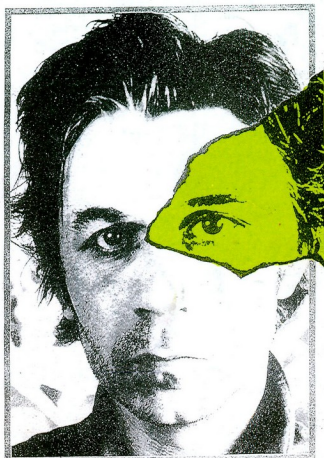
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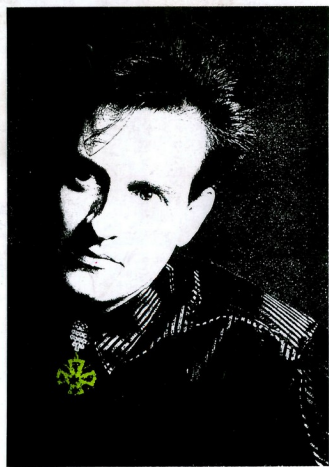
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(Below, left to right) David Hine, Alan Moore, Glenn Fabry, Phil Elliott, Groc, and Bambos (bottom picture).

